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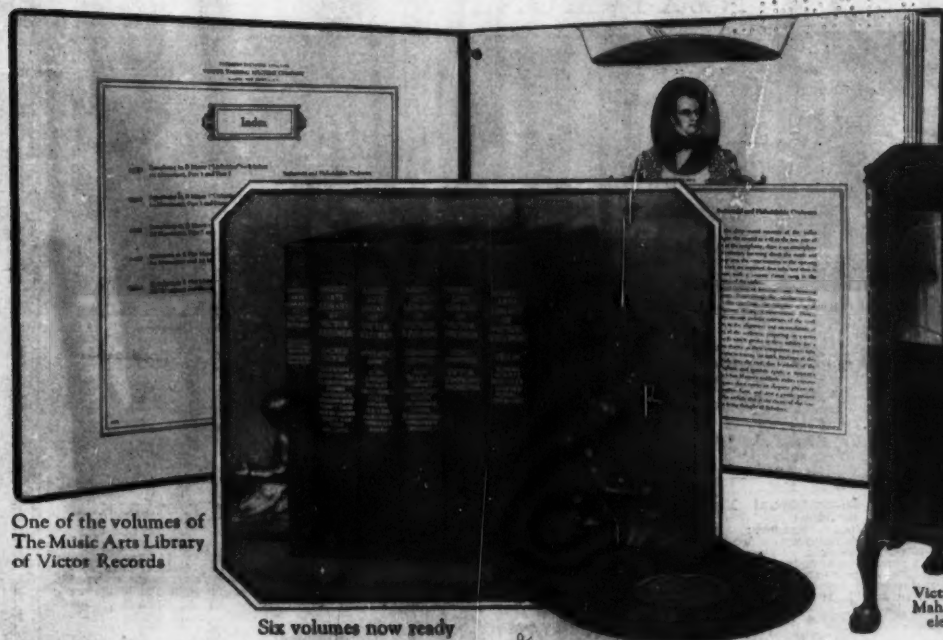
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COSMOPOLITAN

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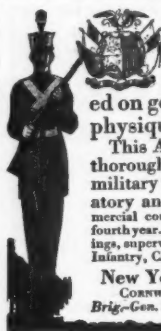


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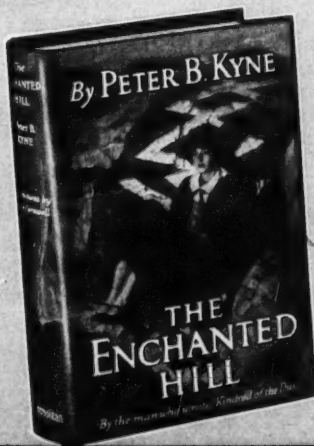
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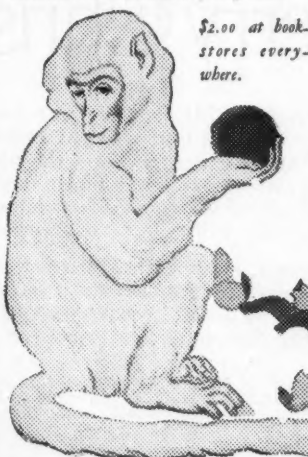
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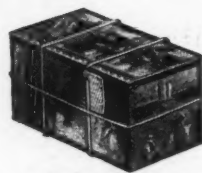
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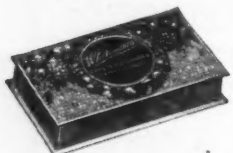
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By George Ade
JAZZMANIA

Illustration by Gordon Ross

WHAT is it that fills the air and is snared by countless antennæ, is an unlisted special course at each university, is the midnight idol of millions of night-hawks, a burning topic at uplift clubs, a theme for sermons and a torment to opera subscribers? This would be a tough riddle to work out if every one didn't know the answer in advance.

Jazz has been stood up against the wall and fairly riddled with bullets a good many times. Always, the day after an execution, it has reappeared at our most perfumed food-palaces, cocky and unashamed. It has more lives than a cat. It is formally exiled by serious conventions but it continues to squeal in the living-rooms of the socially important and in homes where the children are starving but the radioset is working great. It has been denounced as siren, courtesan, peddler of dope, corrupter of youth and a peril to sacred institutions but it never has been made to blush. It is the associate of bootleggers and the pet of excitable schoolgirls. Among those who live on their emotions and give the intellect a rest it is more important than the reparations problem or the adjustment of taxation.

The name itself is a triumph of word-coining. It means what it sounds like. It came slinking out of the underworld and now it is honored by every dictionary.

The Chinese and Wagner must have been right when they made their dramatic music clangorous, ear-splitting and explosive. They believed that the purpose of an orchestra was *not* to

soothe the listener and start him to tapping his foot but to hit him a jolt in the basic ganglia and work him up to an emotional frenzy. Only the few whose nerve centers had been trained could get a kick out of the bedlam turned loose by a Chinese band or those thunder-and-lightning passages in Wagner, but jazz has brought epileptic convulsions within the reach of all.

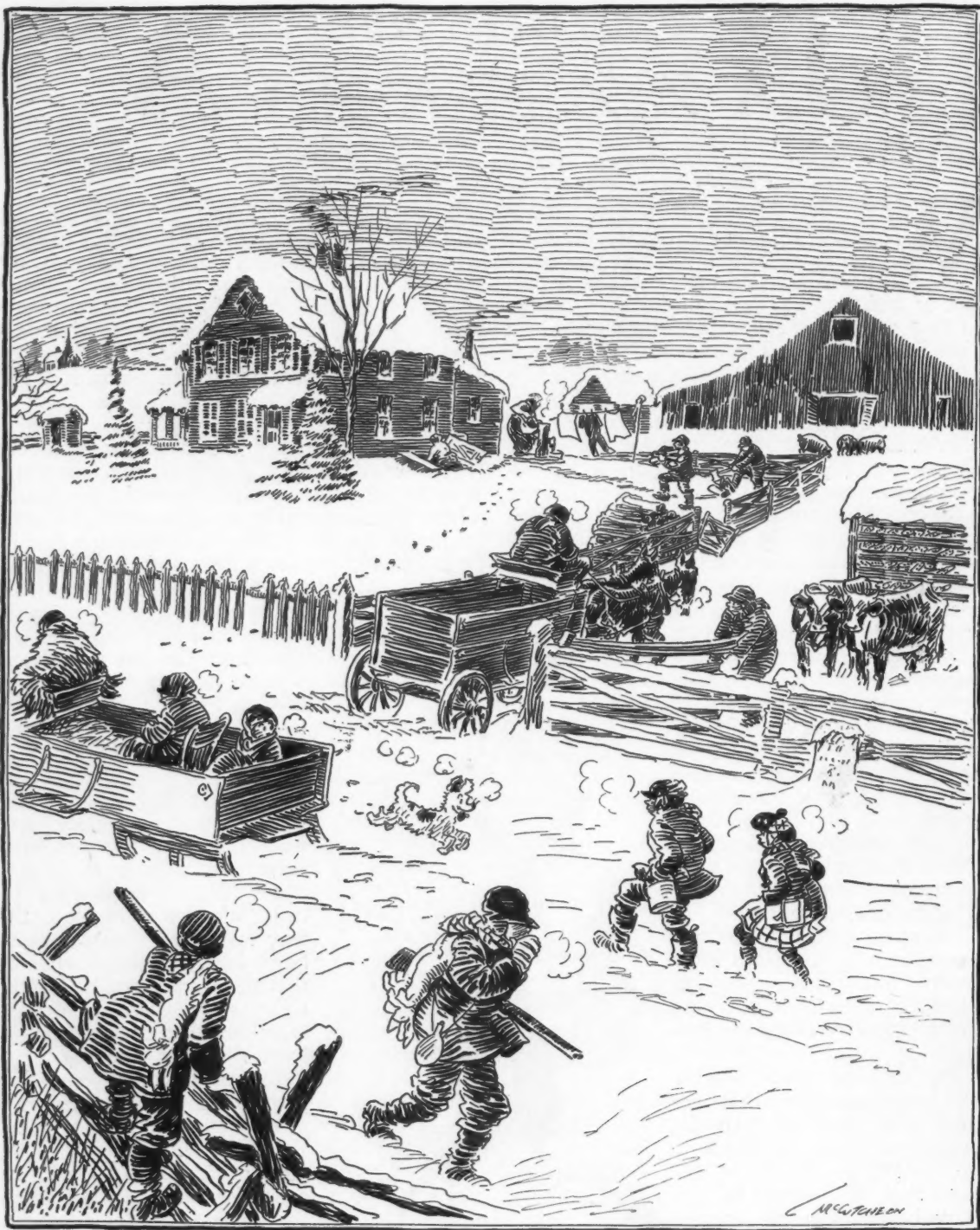
In our weaker moments all of us fall for jazz. It can be inspirational and almost uplifting when turned out by high-salaried specialists but it is an aggravated disturbance of the peace when manufactured by small town blacksmiths and sheet metal workers. Every ragger should be compelled to pass an examination and take out a license before he is permitted to fool with a saxophone.

Several plays and most of the screen dramas have been written against a background of jazz. Probably the directors live at hotels and don't know that anything else is happening in the world. They have used up 8,000,000 feet of film trying to prove that most persons of wealth and all flappers with large search-light eyes and baby faces are dancing to death along a primrose pathway festooned with cabarets, bare legs, cocktails, home-destroyers, canopied bedsteads, cigarets and jazz. The main ingredient has to be jazz. It is the rice in the pudding.

Jazz is about seventy-five percent of modern existence in the residence part of town but let us remember that we have other duties to perform even if we have to get up in the daytime and go to work.

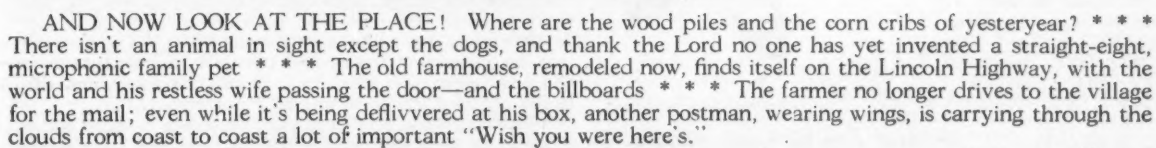


The FARM—*Plain & De Luxe*



Remember the dear dead days when winter meant mittens and gum boots and shotguns and cottontails and nipped noses? * * * When gram'ma used to thaw out the pump, and Ma could be coaxed now and then to loosen up on her store of preserves in the cellar for the school lunch pail? * * * And remember that kid up the road—that "softy" whose ma always brought him to school in a big sled with a hot brick in the straw under his feet—gee-willikers! * * * Remember no matter how much wood you split for the stove, nevertheless you really, cross your heart, had to break the ice on the wash pitcher in the morning?

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The

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ALL Hollywood knows them—the true stories of those meteoric rises and head-long falls that have startled and horrified the world are whispered along the boulevard. But whispered lovingly, for Hollywood understands so much of its stars that the world never knows. Skyrockets. They are like skyrockets. Gathered from everywhere and from nowhere—planted in the quicksands of most amazing temptations—fed by flattery and adulation—fired by too sudden wealth and all too sudden fame—they flame in swift and spangled glory across the sky. And the glory of those skyrockets, brighter for the moment than the jewels they counterfeit, blinds young eyes to chasms that yawn beneath dancing feet.

Skyrockets, sizzling fiercely up—up—up, bursting in a riot that glitters, silver that shines, blues, reds, greens that make you catch your breath while they hang for a miraculous second dimming the very lights of heaven, only to flare out as swiftly, leaving the night blacker for their going; only to crash back to the earth from which they came, charred and broken. I myself have seen many of them in Hollywood and almost broken my heart over two or three. Hollywood skyrockets—poor little shooting stars—children of glory and romance and—disaster.

—ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS.



SHARON KIMM came down the narrow, dusty stairs that led from the shallow rickety rooms where the bathing beauties dressed. She came down with a rush, skipping half the steps, to the accompaniment of the very latest kind of blues, whistled between small, even, white teeth.

Nobody had ever told Sharon Kimm that it wasn't ladylike to whistle. It would have made little difference to her if they had. She whistled to keep up her courage. For the past ten years her whistle had been rather overworked.

Once down, she didn't seem in such a great hurry to cross the gravel path that led to the big stage where the bathing girls were working that day. She loitered, her eyes narrowing at the blaze of sunshine. And the sunshine caught in her hair—great, thick waves of it, banded heavily about her head—and turned its deep bronze to a sheet of flame.

Beneath the gaudy, black and white bathing suit, the slim figure had still almost childish contours—undeveloped breasts, flat little waist that looked as if it would break in a man's hand, thin, graceful arms. Her eyes, that were more gray than green and more green than blue, were almost black now, and they looked out upon the world with a wistful bravado.

A kitten ready to scratch or purr, according to its reception. For in her heart, Sharon Kimm was a little afraid of what the

of THE MOVIE LOTS Skyrocket

Illustrations by
James Montgomery
Flagg



"How'd she get in, Johnny?" said Mildred. "You want to be careful. I hear she's pretty dangerous."

day might bring forth. There had been a nameless, electrical threat of storm in the air yesterday, a coldly speculative glint in Mildred Rideout's eyes.

She was innocent. She was. Just the same, a nasty premonition told her that nobody in Hollywood was likely to believe it.

After all, why should they? Who was she, anyway? A comedy girl, and not such a very good one at that. An extra girl, at five dollars a day, struggling for the barest foothold.

And Mildred Rideout was a big star and an important one. If Mildred Rideout chose to believe that Sharon had tried to flirt with Aaron Savage, there was nothing a mere Sharon Kimm could do to stop her. In a studio where intrigue and favoritism pulled the wires that made the marionettes dance, no one was apt to

side with Sharon Kimm against a star, particularly a star who happened also to be the boss's sweetheart.

With a shrug she drifted over onto the big set, already humming like a beehive beneath the glare of the kleigs. She kept a wary green eye upon the scene, inwardly fighting for poise, outwardly as cool and impudent as a flapper.

But nothing had happened, apparently. Everything was just as usual. The girls cluttered about, giggling in corners, beautiful and almost as naked as nymphs in a woodland glade. The electricians sweated and swore and stamped in and out, ignoring them as utterly as though they had been part of the flimsy scenery. Cameramen strolled about, disdainful and leisurely, waiting for the endless preparations of lights and sets to be completed.

Sharon Kimm strolled over and reported to the assistant director. His name was Johnny. He had been very kind to her ever since she came on the Savage lot, and the assistant director could make it either very tough or very easy for an extra girl. He seemed to sense some of the shyness beneath Sharon's hard impertinence. This morning the sight of his fat, round face, already beginning to take on its look of perpetual worry, brought her a feeling of relief. It was like awakening to the familiar face of the alarm clock after a nightmare.

"Good morning, bright eyes," said Johnny, with his wide grin, "how did you sleep?"

"Alone," said Sharon, pertly, narrowing her eyes.

at him. "I always do. I'm narrow-minded that way. I—" It was then that the voice cut through, silken, knife-edged with laughter, glinting with unfriendly mockery.

Sharon took one, long, silent breath and turned. But Mildred

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

Rideout was not looking at her; had not spoken to her. She was looking at Johnny and she was smiling.

"How'd she get in, Johnny?" said Mildred Rideout, flicking the tail of that smile across Sharon Kimm. "You want to be careful. I hear she's getting pretty dangerous. Maybe we better not have her around this lot any more for a while."

Sharon's round little chin went up. So that was it. Mildred intended to take this thing seriously, to strike, but to strike under cover.

Mildred Rideout went on, playfully. "Yes, Johnny; I don't think your wife would feel safe if she knew you were around on the set with a dangerous girl like that. Some girls are all right. Maybe they don't brag about their virtue. Maybe they haven't got any to brag about. But they're on the level. They wouldn't start trying to double-cross somebody that had been decent to them, just for what they could get out of it. We don't want any girls like that around here, do we, Johnny?"

Johnny was acutely uncomfortable. It was all over his head. He didn't get it. Of course Mildred was as jealous as a cat, always had been, but she'd always been just as friendly with Sharon Kimm as with any of the other girls. Maybe a little more so. Yes, she'd rather gone out of her way to be patronizingly kind to the new girl, and had been repaid by the kid's open adoration.

"Well," said Johnny, shuffling his feet, "I thought—"

"Don't," said Mildred Rideout, with her dry laugh. "You aren't used to it, Johnny. I'll do all the thinking for this troupe. For instance, Johnny, I think there are girls who are always going out of their way to make the boss notice them, hanging around his office, waiting around in the halls, trying to cut out his sweetheart or something. And I think girls like that should be stamped out—" She gulped down the last words, conscious that she had lost her playful pose.

After a silence, Sharon Kimm said, "I—I haven't done anything to make you sore, have I, Mildred? I know I haven't done anything wrong. I swear I haven't."

It was all she could say. Her only defense was one she could not, would not, offer.

It would be easier for Mildred to believe that Sharon Kimm had tried to vamp Aaron Savage, for her own selfish ends, than to believe that the man had made all the advances. It wouldn't make Mildred any happier to know that Sharon had played a constant game of hide and seek, a rather clever game, with a man she loathed but whom Mildred Rideout happened to love. Sharon Kimm had her own ideas of loyalty.

She just stood still, looking squarely into the angry, smiling eyes above her.

"No, I don't suppose you've done anything," said the woman, "and I don't propose to give you a chance. I know your kind, my girl, and I can tell you you're wasting your talents around here. If I were you, I'd find some place where I could employ my talents to better advantage."

Anger flamed, too, in Sharon's odd, long eyes. Her hands were hot with it. Her tongue was bitter with it. Her throat was crammed with things she longed to say. She was a fighter, was Sharon Kimm. Even losing her job, even being kicked back to the foot of the hill when she had just begun to climb a little, didn't hurt as it hurt to stand silent before this crowd and take such a tongue-lashing. But that was playing the game.

Without a word, Sharon Kimm turned and went. In spite of the blazing sunshine, she could hardly see her way. But she went. At least she could know in her own heart that her silence had paid any debt of gratitude she owed the woman who accused her.

CHAPTER II

LUCIA MORGAN was sitting by the one small window that gave upon a dilapidated back-yard, when Sharon Kimm walked into the apartment they shared.

It wasn't much of an apartment. Lucia had done her best that very morning to make it shine a little, with that clean, new look so dear to her heart, but without success. It just couldn't be done. There was something about the carpet, worn threadbare by many feet, and the tinted walls that had faded from pale blue to a nondescript gray, and the cheap Mission furniture, that defied her best efforts.

Oh, it was clean. The bathroom, with its two feet of floor space, the tiny kitchen, were spotless. But it all had a dingy look. There weren't many old apartments in Hollywood, of course. They'd only begun to build apartments in the last decade. So the few there were boasted low rents. And low rent was the only recommendation necessary for Lucia.

Sharon would have taken one of those shining new ones and

let the landlord worry about the rent, or moved on the first of every month, the way some of the girls did. It had been reduced to a system by any number of extra girls. But Lucia had put her foot down. She couldn't live that way. It would drive her crazy.

As Sharon came in, her shoulders sagging under the cheap fur collar that ornamented her plush coat, Lucia looked at her quickly, searchingly. Something was obviously wrong and sometimes it was difficult for Sharon to tell things.

As a matter of fact, Sharon never had to tell Lucia much. She always knew, without forcing her to the effort of many words, when disaster had again overtaken Sharon. She had known ever since that night so long ago when they had carried little Sharon Kimm to the Morgans' house and put her into Lucia's tumbled cot.

So Lucia merely went on mending a pair of cheap, silk stockings—Sharon's stockings—and waiting for details. Sharon sat down in the one rocking chair. "Well," she said, blithely, bitterly, "I've lost my job."

Lucia wasn't altogether surprised. For several days she had rather expected something of the kind. Aaron Savage was a fool. Why had he made eyes at Sharon? Didn't he know it would make trouble for them both? Aaron Savage had invaded the picture industry, had turned all his talents to becoming a successful producer, first because he desired to make money, but secondly because through it he found a happy hunting ground for pretty women. Fortunately, his type was rare.

Lucia looked across at the girl in the rocking chair, who was so manifestly trying to keep up her courage with that jazzy whistle. She didn't understand about Sharon, exactly. Lucia herself was smoothly blond and softly blue-eyed and her skin was like the petal of a wild rose. A good many people thought her quite pretty. But she was never to be troubled with the things that followed Sharon, as flies follow a honey-pot.

She studied the small, deeply-carved red of Sharon's mouth. It reminded her of the round, half-open mouth of a baby-girl who has been eating cherries. She studied the long eyes, that were more gray than green and more green than blue, thickly rimmed with velvety black circles; the level black brows and the straight black lashes, not long but very thick, and the short, tip-tilted nose.

No, Lucia couldn't exactly understand the devastating effect of Sharon Kimm upon men. It had always been that way. And yet to the very end, at the height of Sharon's amazing popularity, up to the very moment of the crash, people could never agree about her beauty. There were always arguments as to whether she was really beautiful. But, beautiful or not, she drew and held men's eyes like a magnet, once she had been put in the proper setting.

Even now, Lucia saw that life wasn't going to be easy for Sharon Kimm, overshadowed as she was by lack of confidence, terrible clothes, ignorance. It wouldn't be easy anywhere, but in Hollywood, which is the melting pot of a thousand kinds of genius, it was bound to be tempestuous, bound to be drama in the raw.

Lucia Morgan knew more of Sharon Kimm's heritage than anyone else in Hollywood would ever know. She had known Sharon Kimm's mother, and even when some people came to call Sharon the most beautiful woman in the world, Lucia knew that she was not and never would be as beautiful as her mother had been.

Sharon in sables and pearls, groomed by expert hands, set against the most perfect background artists could devise, was never so beautiful as Rose Kimm had been in her soiled, cheap finery, in the tiny, dark house facing the railroad tracks.

The girl in the rocking chair sat silent, her elbows on her knees, her eyes on the cheap gilt buckles of her shoes. And something in her attitude, something in her expression, reminded Lucia vividly of Sharon Kimm as she sat in the gutter by the railroad tracks on an afternoon over a dozen years ago, and of the strange events that followed.

The roadway that ran along beside the tracks was thick with dust; although it was the day before Christmas, everything needed rain. Even the shop girls felt that need in the big department stores where the shoppers packed every aisle. The orgy of buying, of senseless, thoughtless, hectic buying, seemed to throb more intensely in the midst of the unseasonable heat.

Probably the only person entirely unaware of anything wrong with the weather was the little girl who sat on the curbstone, squashing the thick, powdery dust between her little bare toes.

She was very dirty. Everything about her was dirty. The dress she wore had once been an unsuitable pink—cheap pink silk it had been, but now it was grimy gray. Her slender bare



People went out of the theater remembering her face. That scene was the match that lighted the skyrocket of Sharon Kimm's success.

legs and her slender bare arms gleamed whitely through streaks of grime. Only the great mass of raw-gold hair that hung over her shoulders and sprayed into her face, as she leaned down to watch her toes squashing in the dust, defied the general monotony.

Nobody came out to play with her. She looked about, secretly, with her narrow, unchildish eyes, at the row of houses that turned unhappy eyes upon the railroad track. Sharon Kimm knew that she was not popular in the neighborhood. Her black, level brows drew down fiercely over the thought. Her mother wasn't popular either. The other women in the row never congregated on the Kimm front porch or hung over the Kimm back fence.

Instinctively and hotly, Sharon Kimm connected this ostracism—that she defied but that tore into her very heart—with the man in the blue suit and brass buttons whom she hated. Her mother called him Eddie. Sharon Kimm hated a good many things in her drab world, but most of all she hated Eddie. Only that morning, when he had come to see Mother, she had told him how she hated him, while Mother protested, half-angry, half-laughing, in a piteous kind of way.

He was a slim, dark, young man with a perpetual smile and eyes that knew too much—eyes that said too much—eyes that assumed too much about every woman they fell upon. They were

eyes that always brought a second look from women, even from the kind of women who are called ladies, when they got on his streetcar and handed him nickels. And sometimes that second look was followed by an indignant flush, and sometimes by an answering smile. It all depended upon the woman.

He stood that morning in the bedroom door watching her mother as she finished dressing. Sharon came in from the backyard, with her noiseless, bare-foot tread. She was only six, then, but just the same his eyes measured her, estimating the price-tag she would one day wear. Oddly enough, he had a hunch that it was to be a high one.

"Hello, kid," he said, smiling at her and holding out his hand.

He had beautiful manners. Even the women in the row of houses that faced the track admitted that, when they discussed him—and Sharon's mother. Sharon's father had spoken of it, too. But then, Sharon's father was a mild man, who had a bad habit of seeing only the best where it was strictly necessary that he should see the worst before it was too late.

Sharon looked at Eddie's outstretched hand and then she did an outrageous thing. She went over and spat in it, with all the collected venom of an infant rattlesnake.

The man flushed darkly behind his eyes, but he did not say anything for a long moment. He was like that. Then, "I

The Skyrocket



JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

During the first hour the women gather in little groups and gossip—

say, you little beast, I'd like to beat you. You need it."

His vanity writhed beneath her open hatred.

Sharon's eyes flamed green. "Yeh? An' you think you can do it? Yeh, yeh, you think you can do it, old Mister Smarty. I'll scratch your eyes out if you try it. I hate you. I wish you was dead."

She flew at him, her little nails unsheathed, her teeth bared, her small heels beating like machine-gun bullets.

Rose Kimm came quickly from the bedroom. It was not the first time Sharon had gone mad and assaulted Eddie. A superstitious fear seeped through the mist that wrapped Rose. Why did Sharon hate Eddie like that? She must know. The child must know. And yet Rose believed that Sharon could know nothing. She was too young.

Rose was not angry as she came out of the bedroom. Only she wondered why Sharon had picked this particular morning for one of her tantrums. The child's fierce screams stirred anew the cold fear that clutched her heart.

Because, on that particular morning, Rose Kimm was laboring beneath the most shameful burden it is given woman to bear—the suspicion that her lover was growing tired of her, was untrue to her.

The guilty passion to which she was a shameful slave was gray-ing to ashes. It took every lure of her looks to fan them to the faintest warmth.

Her looks! They called it "looks" down by the track, where beauty even as a word is almost unknown. Looks were not a

thing men of that neighborhood particularly desired in women belonging to them. Women who had them wanted to be hanging around in front of department store windows, looking at swell dresses and fancy hats. They wanted other men's admiration. They were never satisfied.

Of course, looks didn't last long, as a rule. It took only a certain period of dish washing and hard work, child-bearing and broken sleep, dust and dirt, to run even a pretty girl into the mold of drab middle-age before her time.

That, by right, was what should have happened to Rose Kimm—to her flaming, golden-haired, black-eyed good looks. But it hadn't. She was made of different stuff. At twenty-five she was more magnificent than she had ever been.

It was her husband who'd faded, grown oddly old, in those seven years. And no wonder, though at that "Cap" Kimm had always been a poor sort of stick.

For young Eddie wasn't the first man to come to the Kimms' door in the day time when Cap was at work.

A bad wife; and no man envied Cap, for all her splendor.

They didn't understand why he put up with her. They would not have understood, even if Cap had tried to tell them, which he couldn't have done to save his life. But Rosie was always kind to him, and she joked with him when he came home tired in the evening, and she sat there smiling while he feasted his eyes upon her gardenia skin and her mass of golden hair, and her full-bosomed, curving figure. She was often good-natured and affectionate. Having once known her, Cap felt that half of her was better than all of some thin, colorless woman. Sometimes he felt as though his life depended upon her rich warmth, as though it fed him.

As Rose came out of the bedroom on that morning of the day before Christmas, wearing a dress of purple velvet that gave her black eyes a pansy sheen, she looked swiftly at the dark young man who held at arm's length a screaming,

biting, clawing fragment of humanity. And her eyes dropped, like a wounded bird, because of something they found—or perhaps did not find—in his face.

"Well, I must say, this is a nice, polite child you've brought up, Rosie," said the young man nastily. "It makes it nice and pleasant for a guy to come around, doesn't it?"

"Don't, baby," said Rose, trying to laugh that big, easy laugh of hers that bubbled up like wasting gold. "You're an awful bad little kid. You got a nerve, all right. An' on the day before Christmas, too."

At that, Sharon began to grow a little white. Her eyes, as gray as the tracks that glistened dully under the gathering clouds, went very slowly, fearfully, almost with awe, to a corner of the shabby room.

There, on a cluttered table, stood a small, gray-green Christmas tree. A cartoon of a Christmas tree it was. Bare. Skimpy. Ill-fed.

But it was a Christmas tree. Sharon's first. Her eyes on it, she drew a slow, fearful breath. If anything should happen—

"What makes her hate me like that?" said Eddie, furious with

smarting conceit. "My God, I ain't done anything to her, have I? What's she got it in for me so for?"

Rose's breast heaved under the tight dress. "She don't hate you, Eddie," she said, gently. "She's just making believe. Can't you take a joke, Eddie? Come here, honey. Come and tell Eddie you like him just fine."

Sharon came, dragging her feet, her eyes still on the tree, her lower lip caught back against her teeth. Rose knelt down. The man could see the top of her black velvet hat, where it was worn shiny, and the plumes that were beginning to lie limp. Bedraggled ostrich plumes. Ugh.

"You want a nice Christmas tree, baby?"

she said softly. "You want candles and shiny stuff, like the fairy princess wore where I took you down to the Fourth Street store that day? You want maybe to have a dolly? Then you must be nice to folks. Come, tell Eddie you like him all right."

It was many years before Sharon understood the fear and pain that ruled her mother then. It was almost the only thing that it was always hard for her to forgive.

She came and stood in front of the man, her thin little body held rigid. Her eyes did not leave the bare tree in the corner, only now she saw it blazing and radiant, hung with dreams.

"I—" she began in a thin, hard voice, then, "I can't, Mama. I can't. It'll make me sick, mama." But even as she said it, some pleading in her mother's eyes caught and drove her. "I like you fine, Eddie," she said, every word a curse, and ran into the back-yard.

She stayed hidden there until her mother and Eddie disappeared down the street in the direction of the car-line.

"Ain't she a queer one," said Rose, propitiatingly, as they walked along, attempting to make light of the matter. "Sometimes I don't understand her myself. Sometimes I think she don't really care about nobody in the world but me."

"I guess I can stand it," said Eddie, coldly. "What's the idea, going downtown this morning? You think I like to spend my time trailing around in this heat?"

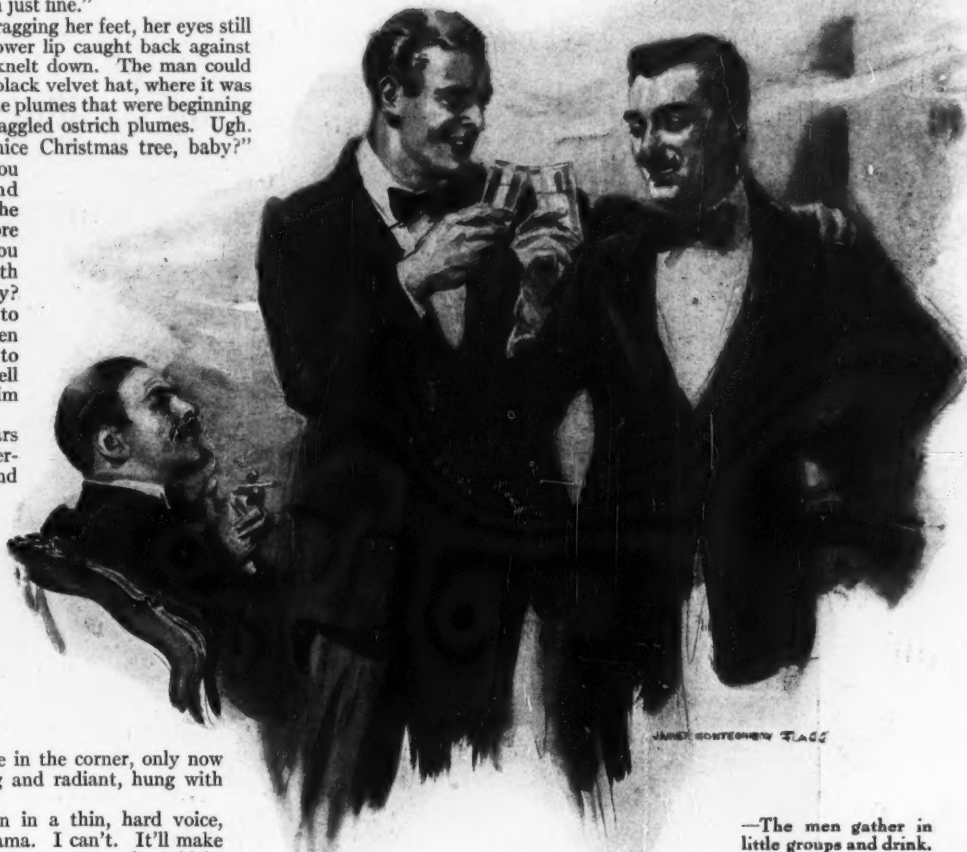
"It's the day before Christmas," Rose explained, pleading, her hands on his coatsleeve. "Cap give me some money to get Christmas things for Sharon. He worked nights—that's what he's been working nights for. He earned extra. It's a big surprise to her."

The man, bored, angry, hot, sneered at her. As she had no strength to resist his wooing, she had no coquetry, no dignity however poor, no variety of mood to keep him, now that satiety was upon him.

"It's too bad he don't work a few nights and get money enough to buy you some new clothes," he said. "I'm ashamed to be seen on the street with you in them old rags."

Rose Kimm's eyes filled with tears. His words gave new life to that deadly fear, transformed it into a deadly certainty. He was tired of her. And what could she do about it? What could she do?

They got on a streetcar and sat down, side by side. Rose smoothed down her velvet dress with unsteady fingers.



—The men gather in little groups and drink.

Instantly, all the eyes in the car were focused upon her. She sat there, her face all soft and quivering, and tried to look as though nothing had happened. What a place to suffer—in a streetcar!

And then she realized that Eddie was looking at her approvingly. He wasn't unconscious of the admiration that Rose Kimm, even in her gaudy, worn clothes, could call forth wherever she went. That young chap opposite, decidedly a gentleman, was staring at her with startled appreciation. The old codger in the corner was obviously trying to catch her eye. The girl next to him, a stylish pretty young thing, whispered to her mother: "Look at that stunning woman. Did you ever see anyone quite so pretty?"

Eddie threw back his shoulders. He put a familiar and possessive hand on Rose's knee and said something, very low, in her ear. He had counted upon that look of grateful adoration that turned her eyes up to him. That'd let them know she belonged to him.

The woman's heart leaped within her. Maybe she had been wrong. Maybe he was only cross about something. And because she had been dazed with pain and fear, her whole simple brain swam in a new hope. She forgot, in that passionate wave of hope, the deadly certainty that actually dwelt at the bottom of her heart.

She looked happily at the pretty girl who was still staring at her. Rose Kimm was grateful for that look. She envied her the fresh, untouched sweetness. Perhaps if she had a hat like that girl's, and a soft pink dress—perhaps Eddie would be tender and kind as he had been in the beginning.

Rose Kimm's slow mind swung slowly upon the pivot of the girl's clothes and her own. If she had better clothes, she'd have

"Walking the dog," according to the most approved method of the Barbary Coast—everyone knew the man; nobody knew the girl.



a better chance. Eddie was right. She'd been wearing these old rags forever. Eddie helped her off the car. She smiled at him, her heart suffocating with sweetness.

She swam home upon a cloud of delight. Everything was ablaze with a new light. She was drugged with happiness. She had passed out of the dingy circle of unpainted houses by the track, the bare-footed child playing in the gutter, the thin, ineffectual man who was her husband. Nothing had existed for her during the past hours that connected her with them at all.

Then, quite suddenly, she saw Sharon sitting on the curb, making pictures in the dust with her bare toes. Beside her sat the Deming boy, in his corduroys and old red sweater.

Rose Kimm walked slowly toward them. Once she ran her tongue over her lips, like an opium smoker beginning to come out of his dream. Her throat felt dry and thirsty.

When she was quite close she heard Sharon's husky little voice talking to the Deming boy.

"I'm going to have a Christmas tree," it said, "a Christmas tree with candles and shiny stuff and stars and a dolly and candy canes. Everything on it, just like those you see in the stores."

The Deming boy looked at her rather scornfully. He couldn't

see any reason to get so excited about a Christmas tree.

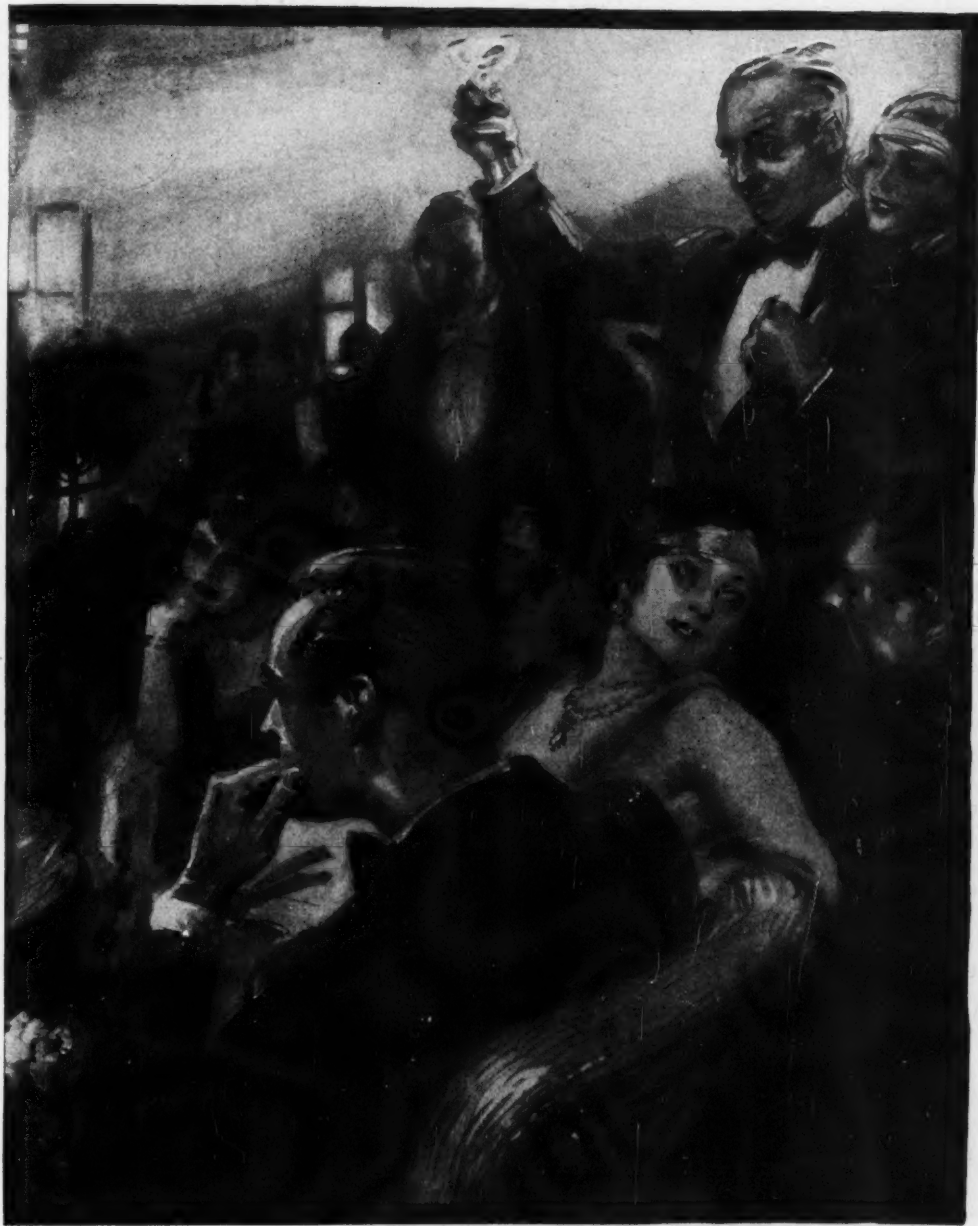
"Gee, don't you always have a Christmas tree?" he asked, with contempt. "We do. Don't you remember the swell one we had last year?"

"I remember," said Sharon, softly; "you bet. But your old ma didn't ask me to look at it. I don't care. I didn't want to see your old Christmas tree. I saw Lucia Morgan's. It was a swell one, you bet. Her ma asked me in. Besides—"

She stopped. Her thin throat was quivering like a bird's and, though Rose Kimm couldn't see her eyes, she knew somehow that they were the sea-blue that sometimes flowed into them when Sharon was very happy.

"Besides—that's not like having your own. Presents is all right. I got a present last year. But—I want me a Christmas tree. With candles and stars and cor—cornuceptions. I—"

She looked at him, narrowing her eyes. Sharon was not one to blab her dreams to a hard world. But the Deming boy had nice brown eyes and her small heart was very full. "I can see it now. I been seeing it all day. In my head. You know when you want something bad, if you shut your eyes you can see it? I'm going to stay awake tonight just as long as I can, seeing it. And in the morning—it'll be there."



The guests were fascinated, while the two figures whirled, dipped, soared. Then the music stopped and a riot of applause broke forth.

Rose Kimm went slowly up the board walk, up the four unpainted steps that led to her house.

At the sound of her feet on the steps, Sharon turned. Her face was full of lights that danced in her eyes and in her bronze hair that was already so much darker than her mother's, and in the dimples about her round mouth. Her mouth was the only thing about Sharon's face that seemed to belong to a child of six.

The sea-blue eyes fastened on the big, flat box under Rose's arm. They peeped, half-shyly, as though fearing to see too much, half-boldly, as though she could not wait.

"Is that—the Christmas?" she whispered.

Rose Kimm did not answer. She went on quietly into the dark living-room. She looked at the tree. She stood there a long time, the poor, city-bred ghost of pine scent in her nostrils.

Then she turned and went, with slow step, into the bedroom.

Little Sharon Kimm slipped through the front door, her eyes down, in some sweet secret anticipation. Her dancing feet made no noise upon the porch, but she banged the door loudly, so that anyone might be warned of her approach.

It was entirely dark now, in the small parlor. Outside, the clouds that pressed down upon the earth had begun to bleed heavy, sluggish drops.

"Mama? Mama?" Sharon Kimm called into the darkness. No answer came. Sharon laughed secretly. Mama was hiding the things.

Then she called again, "Mama?"

It was kind of funny Mama didn't answer. It was kind of funny there was no light in the kitchen. She listened, one foot seeking comfort from the other.

Raindrops had begun to fall dully upon the worn shingles.

She was afraid of the dark now. She stood still, afraid to move.

"Mama," she screamed breathlessly, and ran into the kitchen. She climbed upon the sink and reached for the swaying light. Its rays found the kitchen empty except for dirty dishes and ancient food.

But beyond, the light began to creep into the bedroom.

Sharon got down, and went slowly into that room. She was not afraid now.

Three times she swallowed, and then she said again, "Mama."

Her hands shook the silken shoulder, pulling it. "Mama, speak to me."

They found Sharon sitting there, in the dim light, trying to hold back with her two dirty little hands the life blood that poured in a dark stain over the

(Continued on page 116)

Neysa McMein

[Pronounced Nee-sah McMeen]

*Believes Your Fate May Hinge
Upon Your Name*

What's In Mr Name

WE ALL have our crosses to bear. I was christened Marjorie.

There are those, it has been patiently pointed out to me, who do not share my feelings about the name of Marjorie. It induces in them neither mental pangs nor nervous tremors; they are able, as you might say, to take it or let it alone. There are even those who look upon it as the pearl among feminine titles. They select girls named Marjorie to marry, and then pass the name on to their subsequent young, so that there may always be Marjories in the world. I wouldn't for anything have you get the idea that there is not much to be said on their side—if we didn't all have our little likes and dislikes, where would politics be today?

My feeling in the matter is purely personal. The application of the name Marjorie to me was a regular little masterpiece of the inappropriate. I always see a Marjorie as a small, dark girl, with netted hair and quiet hands. And Nature had a lot of other plans in mind when she got around to building me.

As long as I can remember, I was pretty fairly bitter about my name. The sound of it, to put it in the form of a simile, was like a red rag to a bull in a china shop. Probably this was because the vibrations of its letters were all wrong for me—we'll get around to that later if you think you'll be feeling strong enough. Being one of those resourceful children who are little, if any, trouble around the house on rainy days, I fixed the matter up temporarily by giving myself a different name and insisting upon being addressed by it; the name of my choice at that time was Patricia.

It may be that the setting down of even these few reminiscences has got into my blood, but I'm afraid that, practically here and now, I shall have to go into the story of my life, in a mild way; not the whole works—just a rough idea of the thing. Stop me if you've heard it, won't you?

I grew up in Quincy—given a map of Illinois and a quiet half-hour, you will probably be able to find it, or perhaps you may have some traveled friend who once went through there on a fast train. I went to Chicago to art school. We art students, in that Bohemian way of ours, used to gather together and give amateur shows, as frequently as possible. It was in one of these that I had the big idea of blacking up and giving an impersonation of Bert Williams. My partner in this spectacular production was a girl who dressed as a scarecrow, and did one of those fascinatingly loose, casual dances in which all stage scarecrows indulge. As a daring climax to the act, I was to pile her into a wheelbarrow and push her off the

stage, down an incline, and into the chaotic realms back-stage.

At the actual performance, crazed with success and first-night nervousness, I heaped her in the wheelbarrow, trundled it triumphantly off, and missed the incline—clean. We crashed rakishly down a flight of steps, and in record-breaking time had amassed one of the most complete joint collections of bruises, turned ankles, and sprained wrists ever seen in the Middle West.

But the evening had other results, too, and scarcely less harrowing ones. Paul Armstrong, the playwright, happened to be a member of the audience; he offered me a part in his vaudeville act, "A Romance of the Underworld."

Well, you know how a girl of the art-student age feels about going on the stage. She is all convinced that with any sort of chance she can put the American drama right on its feet. There was my father, of course—maybe you don't know how they feel, out in the great open spaces of Illinois, about girls who go on the stage—but I talked him into it by a grueling, wearing-down process. Having joined the company, fairly secure to the title of America's Least Talented Actress, I traveled with "A Romance of the Underworld" to New York. And it was in New York that I learned, among one or two other things, about scientifically changing my name. (I warned you that we were going to come round to that.)

Homer Davenport, the cartoonist, first told me about it. He was intensely interested in the science of numerology, which deals

with numbers—and, therefore, with dates, with vibrations and with given names. I was with it heart and soul the moment I heard of it. You see, in decency I had had to pack away my babyhood "Patricia" with my dolls and roller-skates, and I was being called Marjorie right and left. I felt that something really had to be done about it.

Mr. Davenport sent me to a charming and brilliant woman who taught—and still teaches—students of numerology, and who gives as many of her crowded hours as she can to the amazing numbers of men and women who come to her for advice. This doesn't mean at all that she is a seeress, or that she does what is euphemistically known as "giving readings." She doesn't go in for clinging draperies and clanking beads, nor does she lead you into a dim, incense-weighted room and tell you in mystical tones that you are soon to cross water, and that, if you know on which side your bread is buttered, you will beware of a certain light woman whom you have thought of as a friend. She is the exponent of a science—for numerology is just as much a science, I believe, as is surgery, or physics, or anthropology, or any of the

How the Numerologists Would Find Out if You Are Correctly Named

The alphabet is translated into numbers as follows:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Everybody comes under one of three classifications—

The AIR CONCORD, which has the numbers 3, 6 and 9

The FIRE CONCORD, " " " " 2, 4 and 8

The WATER CONCORD, " " " " 1, 5 and 7

Taking the name MARY as an example (the letters of which appear in heavy type above), the corresponding figures below are her numbers; thus—

M A R Y

4 1 9 7—which added together equal 21

Now (adding in turn the two figures in 21) 2+1=3

Therefore, Mary comes under the AIR CONCORD

And, as the date of her birth should regulate her name, there would be no need for MARY to change her name if born on any of the following dates:

3rd—6th—9th—12th—15th—18th—21st 24th—27th 30th

All of these dates are reducible, by addition, to the first three figures, or the AIR CONCORD, 3, 6 and 9.

Of course this chart touches only the surface of numerology. Other numbers in connection with a certain Mary might make the name entirely favorable for her.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BACHERACH

When her name was Marjorie, she was a struggling young actress, and suffered from sore throat. But since she changed her name to Neyssa, she's become a famous magazine cover artist, her oil portraits have been accepted by the National Academy and her throat never bothers her.

big boys. It is as clean and cold and ordered as they are.

I have neither the heart nor the courage to stagger into technicalities. In the second place, I never was any good at machinery, and in the first, you would be so bored that you would walk right out on my act, and then how would I feel? But look, it's something like this. Numerology is a simple reduction of life to numbers. You begin—and logically enough for anybody—with the date of your birth.

According to the numerals in your birthday, you fall into one of three classifications: air, fire, or water—three of the simple elements which, according to the old sciences, go to make up this little world of ours. The numbers 3, 6 and 9 represent the

air classification, or *concord*, to use the technical term; 2, 4 and 8 are fire; 1, 5 and 7 are water.

Say you were born on the 27th. You add together the digits forming the number 27, 2 and 7, which gives you 9. You are, therefore, of the air concord; what is usually called an air person. Your numbers then are 3, 6 and 9. You are attuned to them. They are, so to speak, the key in which you are written.

So, being born on the 27th, and of the air concord, you should benefit by reserving your important enterprises for the 9th or the 6th or 3rd of the month, or any date the total of whose numbers equals 3, 6 or 9; the 15th, for instance, would be a favorable day—5 plus 1 being 6. And your big months (Continued on page 132)

No-
body
Sees
the



Her eyes were not raging now, but desperate and hunted. "What's the use of our trying to go on together like this?" she cried.

Waiter's Face

THE weather was doing what so seldom the weather will do; it was living up to a romantic tradition. According to poets of the hardier school a dying year should be lapped in a white winding sheet. So here it was, eleven o'clock of New Year's Eve and snowing to beat all get-out.

In the country, a good he-snowstorm makes a lovely design for putting on a holiday greetings card. In the city it just makes an infernal mess for the street-cleaning department to wrestle with.

This snowfall appeared to be central over the Borough of Manhattan. It had come through the Narrows, riding on the nose of a brisk nor'wester and, just before it entered in by the water gates of the city, it spread-eagled this way and that and turned the Upper Bay into a puzzle for pilots and transformed the squatty shape of the military prison on Governor's Island to the seasonable likeness of a large round black fruit-cake with icing on the top. It rushed thence across to and up among the downtown districts, greatly discommoding those reveling cits who had gathered where Wall Street butts into a burying-ground; and who, in accordance with a stately old religious rite peculiar to

lower New York, were tooting on tin horns in front of Trinity Church to welcome in the borning year. Borne on still farther northward, it now was more or less having its way with the larger bodies of celebrants along Broadway and in Columbus Circle.

By midday of next day it would be licked to a custard—molten into puddles of foggy slush where cellar furnaces exhaled their hot breath up out of sidewalk gratings, roiled and fouled and crunched down beneath the heels and the tires of the town, flung up in crumpled billows by the conscripted shovel crews, and under the park trees and on the park meadows would show a stark and grayish cast like the face of a grimy pauper whose corpse the undertaker scanted. And the longer it lingered there the sootier and the dirtier and the deader-looking it would get to be. You may worry the city with your winter weathers; you cannot keep her licked for any great length of time.

Though in this, its present hour, the snow was triumphant and lusty. Crackles of red flame spurted from under the squeezing wheels of the "L" trains so that each car, so to speak, was a chariot of fire. Layers of the big flakes were stripped up from house tops by the fickle wind which had brought them hither,

By
Irvin S. Cobb

Illustrations by
Marshall Frantz

A
New Year's
Eve
Story
of a Man
Who Was
DOWN—
But Not Quite
OUT



and blown in slatty formations, like riddled sail-cloths, a hundred feet or two hundred above the street level. It was a hard night on ferryboats, panhandlers, automobile radiators and traffic policemen. It was a great night for polar bears up in the Zoo and descriptive writers on the morning newspapers.

For a small group of mixed gentry who for some time past had been huddled together—collapsed together would be a better phrase—within the insufficient shelter of the service entrance to Kildare's Restaurant on Seventh Avenue, the situation sliced two ways but was buttered on one side only. It was a hard night on them, seeing that in this place where they awaited the call to duty, like numbed flies that cluster in a bottle mouth, the playful gusts kept spiraling in to finger at their bodies through their threadbare garments and the snow would scurry about their scrooging feet, then thaw to ice-water, then seep through the cracks in indifferent shoe-leather and say "howdy-do" to all their chilled toes. It would be a great night for them insofar as

they had a job of work and pay for it in prospect, and the promise of some hot victuals afterwards and the hope of a split out of a sizable tip. It was notoriously a fact that on New Year's Eve tips ran to the larger denominations. These persons were extra waiters, sometimes called, in the vernacular of the trade, dinner bums.

You savvy dinner bums?—yes, no? Very well then: Dinner bums are, to orthodox waiters, what jackals are to lions. They take care of the overflows and surplusages. Also they are a conglomerate breed; may have been anything before they became the things they are. Whereas a true waiter always has been a waiter except when he was young and callow and a bus-boy, which circumstance in nowise disturbs the orderly line of descent, since a bus-boy merely is a waiter in the larval or bug stage of his evolution.

Dinner bums come in when there is a rush of business. Other times they stay outside and grow lean. Sometimes they stand by to serve a meal for the sake of a poorer meal for themselves; sometimes, as on high days and holidays, they serve the meal and get the meal

and then a bit on the side. Their tastes are simple, alcoholically simple usually. They lodge where you would need a cop's aid to find them. For their lighter hours of relaxation they read other people's cast-aside papers on park benches; for more serious literature there are the bulletins posted up in the windows of low-grade employment agencies. Under acute financial stress they may part with their overcoats; but they cling, with a grip which will never loosen, to their regalias—the short black jacket or jumper, the black waistcoat, cut low and heavily appliquéed with caked grease spots; the turned-down collar, the black snap-on bow tie, the white cotton gloves, the ostensibly white shirt front, which may be a sheet of note-paper with pencil marks to represent the studs, and then again on the other hand may be of a woven fabric resembling linen with as much fidelity

Nobody Sees The Waiter's Face

as cotton shoddy can ever resemble linen. They are beaten men but beggars for punishment. Counted out before they start in, they keep coming back at life for more of the same. In short, they are dinner bums, one step up from hospital cases, one step down from sandwichmen.

In this collection there were an even dozen of specimens, assorted as to ages and sizes, but in type generality all true to form, and for the most part silent. After suffering becomes a fixed habit you quit quarreling about it.

Eventually there came to them relief. A door opened for their passage at the back of the entry-way and one by one, like sheep going up to a stile—in a variety of ways they were exceedingly much like sheep—these twelve slumped into a sort of store-room which was a purgatory for the confinement of bad and rubbishy smells. Here a supernumerary checked them off and gave to each a numbered brass token to be worn in view on the left lapel and assigned to each his station. The last man in the shambling line was one, you'd say, who'd naturally be the last man in any line anywhere. A believer in the theory of progressive reincarnation would go farther than this and say that, in his last previous phase of earthly existence, this one probably had been a louse and in the next succeeding phase undoubtedly would be a worm.

He was badged, admonished as to his detail, and sent across one of the principal guest-rooms, now beginning to thicken with patrons, to a small curtained alcove kind of place known at Kildare's as a private dining-room. He went on through at a difficult pace, dragging one foot either because it was lame or because it was cold, and with a shoulder which drooped as if from incipient paralysis. He had white hair and a pimply bloated face, also white, except for the unwholesome asterisks of the pimple-heads; a fattish neck, a figure that was gross amidsthips but bony and sparse elsewhere, and inside the cotton gloves which he had drawn on he had red chapped hands that trembled slightly but constantly.

An overlord, not the head-waiter but a captain of waiters, received him on arrival at his post. This captain was Irish; his name was Slack but his manners were not. He was massive and blue in the jowl and had authority about him and a regular ambuscade of black mustache on his upper lip. That he was Irish proved something. It proved Kildare's to be a born and stubborn survivor of that old line of New York restaurants which began to expire, suffering from a swift and a stern mortality, after Prohibition came in. When the last of New York's Irish waiters dies he'll be stuffed and set up in a glass case at the Museum of Natural History to remind future generations of an extinct species of mammalia and a discontinued plane of civilization on this planet. Or should be.

Other evidences abounded that Kildare's lingered on, against odds and the inevitably nearing day of its passing-out. There was an air of a waning vitality. The screen which guarded the inner door of the alcoved space leading back to the pantry was nicked in the frame and frayed in the tapestries. The curtains which shut it off as a nook from the main floor had a dulled drabby aspect. The small serving-table, upstage and to the left, was veteran furniture and its uniform was the obsolete golden oak. The linen on the small dining-table in the center was old-fashioned; its heavy plated silverware likewise.

There was an essential perfume compounded of decay and shuttiness and perished foodstuffs and ancient upholstery—a sickish blended savor rather suggestive, on the whole, of rotted pomegranates in a disused cupboard—which would have identified it as Kildare's to a blind man. Finally, there was no saxophonish orchestra playing anywhere about the premises and this, of all signs, was the surest sign of all that this establishment shortly must draw a black bean from the sheriff's hat and be shot at sunrise against a back wall of the bankruptcy court.

At sight of the designated extra, shuffling in between the door drapes, Captain Slack's bushy eyebrows erected themselves and arched like the profiled spines of irritated black cats.

"So, 'tis you, eh, Jackson?" he said coldly. "I might've guessed 'twould be you. 'Twould be like young Mr. Jacoby, out beyond, to send me the washin's and scourin's of his leavin's."

"Yes, sir," said the derelict humbly.

"Well, you'll be on your toes tonight, or I'll see to it you never get so much as the nub of that blossomy nose of yours into here again," counseled the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"I'm not forgettin' so soon what happened wit' you one week ago tonight, Christmas Eve. If the gent of the party you're to wait on tonight sh'd be bringin' his own hooch wit' him you'll leave it alone the same it was rank poison, which it's likely to be, at that. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"You'll not be dippin' into his flask on the sly until you're cock-eyed, like the last time, mind you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if, on the other hand, he should bring none and want some—cocktails or highballs or wine or what not—you'll say to him the lid is on very clos't tonight, but you'll see what can be done as a special favor and then you'll come to me and I'll come and take the matter up wit' him meself in person?"

"Yes, sir."

"That way he's not so likely to boggle at the price I'll be askin' him. It'll be stuff out of me own private stock, I'll tell him, and mention the risk I'm runnin'."

"Yes, sir."

"Never mind so many of them 'Yes, sirs,' but pay heed what I'm tellin' you now." Captain Slack grew gloomily reminiscent: "To think of havin' all this pother over gettin' a drop of liquor to drink in a place like this. Thk! Thk!" He clucked with his tongue. "I mind the times when a New Year's Eve night the house wouldn't hold the crowd would be here, wit' horns goin' and rattlers rattlin' and the confetti flyin' that thick through the air you could cut it wit' knives, and the grape—champagne, nothin' but champagne that night, and nothin' less than quarts—comin' up in shoals like the herrin's of the Western Ocean, and plenty of the best people passin' out all over the place and Big Jimmy Dunn, the bouncer, chuckin' out the disorderlies, and dead soldiers piled in every corner and the shuckers workin' double shift at the oyster counters and all.

"Them was the times! And now look at the dam' place, wit' me havin' time to stand here palaverin' wit' the likes of you instead of jumpin' to be four places at once't the way it was then." In his throat he made a dismal sound of spitting, then brought himself back out of idealities to present realities.

"There'll be two only for you in your party tonight—a gent and a lady. 'Twill be supper for them. It's been ordered; the checker knows about it. And you'll straighten out your back and move brisk and try to show a little spirit, will you, now?"

"Yes, sir."

"You say you will, but you won't," stated his superior accusingly. "God's sake, man, why can't you brace up for once't and it the edge of the New Year's? Was you always a down-and-outer, I wonder? From the looks of you I think you must have been. Look at me, now. I was a green wild lad once't, but I took a brace on meself in time and made up me mind I'd amount to something. Prob'ly you're no older than I am. Maybe not so old. 'Twould be hard to tell, offhand, whether you're thirty or sixty. Say you're forty-five. Well, that's me own age. And you're what you are and me what I am, givin' you orders and mistrustful you'll not carry 'em out. And yet, 'tis possible you had as good a chance't of luck at the beginnin' as me. Maybe a better chance't; I couldn't say as to that."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, that's enough for that." He looked at his watch. "They was due at eleven-thirty. It's that now, wit'in a minute or so. It might be the streets bein' slippery delayed 'em." He stepped to the latticed arch of the trick doorway. "That looks to be him comin' in now."

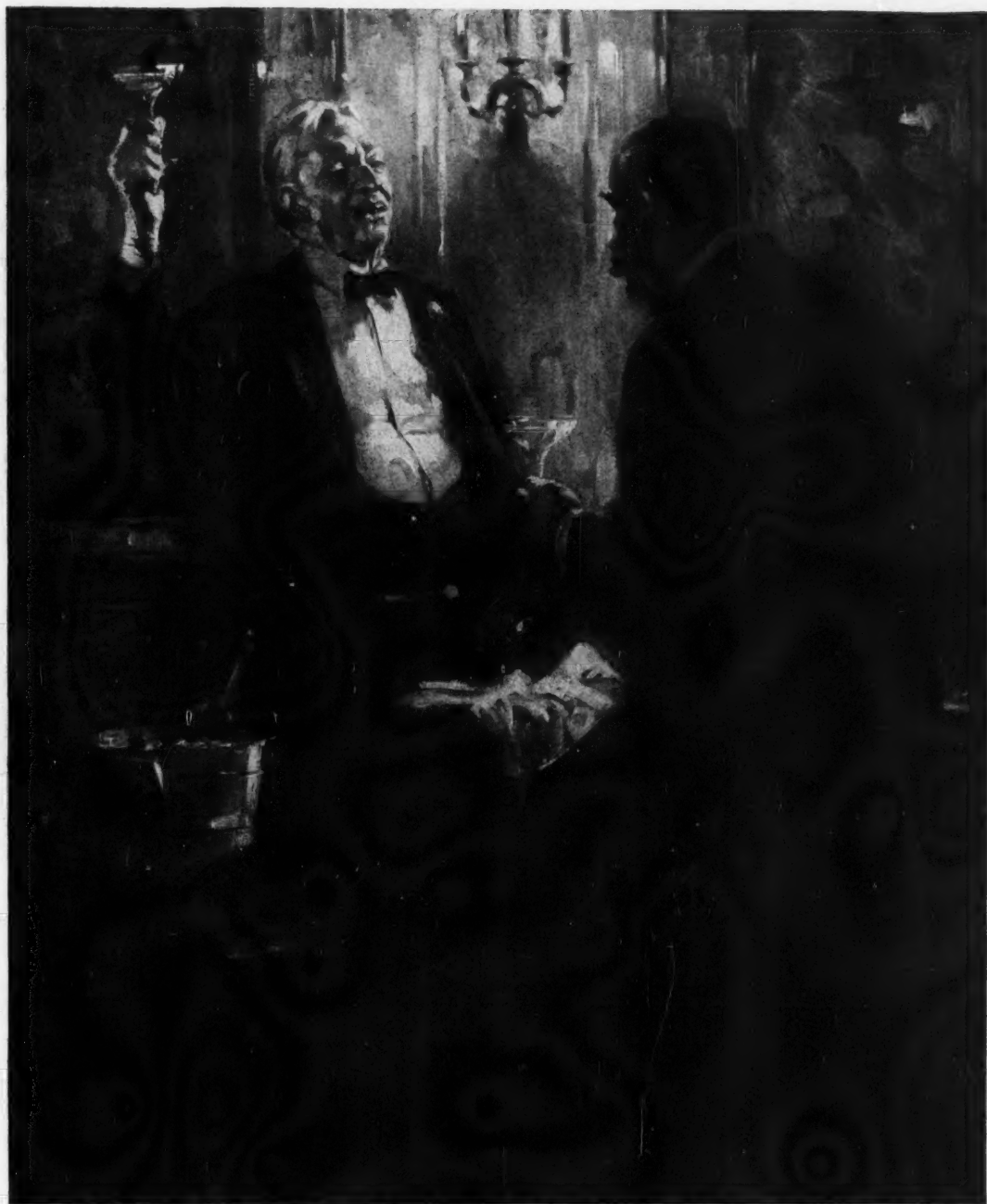
Chance had prompted it as accurately as a stage entrance in a musical comedy.

"It's them," said Slack, as if on cue, and went forth to greet the approaching couple. "Get yourself busy, you!" He tossed the final command backward over his shoulder.

"Yes, sir," said the man called Jackson.

SET on doing the honors, Slack in a minute returned, drawing the dragged curtains aside for the escorted pair, and following them on in. Deftly he elbowed the lesser functionary aside so that the latter was shunted quite out of the picture and, making quite an hospitable little flurry of it, he relieved the gentleman of his fur ulster and his hat and his muffler and hung them on hooks beside the door. But the lady disregarded Slack's dumb play of invitation. The lady, as might be observed, was out of sorts about something. She passed swiftly to a dining chair and over it she flung her brocaded and ermined opera cloak and in it she—yes, flung also would be the proper word for the next action—and in it she flung herself and sat there, drumming with one tight fist on the table top before her so that her bracelets clicked.

"Mind that overcoat, Dan," warned the man; "there's something in the pockets." He was a well-built, trimly-groomed man verging on middle age, of a stock-brokerly aspect, and if a face which was so full-fleshed as his might be said to be haggard, then



"We'll drink to them!" the dinner bum cried. "May they both live to have a hundred more New Year's like this!"

he had such a face—haggard, for sure, and with a burned-out glaze of the eye, not bespeaking dissipation exactly but more as though some persisting hidden fire burned him to clinkers within yet only slightly had scorched the outer casing of the man.

"I'm mindin', sir," said Slack and smiled guardedly. "I taken note of the heft of her."

"Cocktails are in the flask," stated this beforehanded customer, "and champagne in the other pocket. I ought to know it's there—I sat through three acts with it grinding into the small of my back. See that the stuff's chilled properly, will you?"

"I will that," said Slack. Very sharply he snapped his fingers at his aide, who swiftly had transferred himself elsewhere, being now over at the side board, his twitching hands concerned with the service set and his back to the three of them. "You hear, Jackson. Leave all else be till you've fetched a shaker and a wine-bucket wit' plenty of ice in for the both of them . . . 'Tis a nasty night outside, sir," he added, making ready to withdraw.

"It's a nasty night—everywhere," said the man. He put a

dragging emphasis on the last word. Slack's eyebrows went up; Slack went out.

Silently, for all that he was so stumble-gaited, the waiter disappeared behind the screen. The woman raised her head and, as for her, she showed the face of a still pretty woman but aging fast and driven hard; it was the face of a woman who looks behind doors for ghosts—and finds them. There are houses which make you think of people. But here now, was a woman who'd put you in mind of a house. It would be a haunted house—you know, with echoing corridors, dreaded recesses, black corners, turnings and twistings in the voided dark.

She lifted her head and sniffed and spoke with scorn in her voice, and malice:

"This shabby hole! Why, it's so stale it fairly stinks. Ugh! And so this is where we two must come to celebrate—God, celebrate!—the New Year."

"You said you didn't want to go to one of the smart places," the man expostulated. It was plain he held fast to his patience



Then as he, too, departed without a backward glance, he said something under his

with labored efforts. "You said when I mentioned the new Trocadero and offered to try to get a table there that you just wanted a quiet place, with no music, away from the crowds and the dancing and all that."

"Oh, yes, yes, I know I did. But if we had to hide away alone, why did we have to hide here?"

"Well, the food here is always good. Anyhow, it used to be." He took the remaining seat, facing her. "Maybe"—he strained to achieve a falsified cheerfulness—"maybe it'll be good enough to make up for that rotten show we just saw, eh?"

"It was you who picked out the show. At least you can't blame me for that."

"I'm not blaming you for anything, Dot." His strained pressure to lift up the blight of this discontent was plaintive; almost it was pathetic—a hopeless attempt to accomplish a thing admittedly still more hopeless. "Say, I could do with a cocktail to take the taste of that morbid last act out of my mouth. I wonder why these damned playwrights can't stick to pleasant subjects instead of lugging in so many gloomy, sexy situations to remind other people of their mistakes—and things? Where's that slinky waiter of ours? . . . Oh, there you are!"

He was aware that without being seen or heard the man had got himself back in again and on past them to where the fur coat swung.

"Hurry those cocktails along, will you?"

He gulped down the orange-colored mixture in the glass which shortly was put in his reach. His companion sipped at her drink, then put her glass down and shoved it from her across the table as though she found the flavor of it as distasteful as the taste of all else this night had been.

"People!" she said bitterly. "Why must we forever be running into people—some people, anyhow? Sometimes I feel as though I could gladly soak the whole world in oil, myself included, and touch a match to it and laugh while we all burned together. I feel that way tonight."

"Forget 'em, Dot," he advised. "At least we'll not be meeting any more of them at Kildare's. That's one consolation." He smiled wryly. "What do you care what they think?"

She was not to be diverted from her course. A capacity for self-pity is one of the last things any woman surrenders.

"It isn't so much what they think," she said, slowly; "it's what they do. Oh, they don't cut you dead in public any more—that's passé; it's out-of-date. They let you live your own life; that's the modern way of putting it. But they don't help you to live it. They don't put themselves out to make it any easier for you to go on trying to live it. Take that smirking snake of a Gale woman tonight." She made a motion to her breast, an odd motion as of turning a knife in a wound.

"To hell with the Gale woman and that new second husband of hers, too!" he said, his bedeviled temper slipping. "I'm not letting the she-cats around this town disturb me if I can help it. I'd suggest you do the same. You're nervous tonight, girl, that's all."

"Take that woman," she went on as if she had not heard him, her fingers still twisting at that invisible hilt, "take her, floating up to me in the lobby of the theater, purring and smiling and gushing, but with her claws out and saying, loud enough for everybody there to hear: 'Oh, how do you do, Mrs.—Jefford?' Slurring the Jefford part, hesitating over it as though she didn't know exactly what name she ought to call me by. I got her meaning. She meant that I should get it. And then she goes on: 'It seems ages since I've seen you, Mrs.—er—Mrs. Jefford. Where have you been keeping yourself?' Oh, she made it plain enough, the vixen did."

"And yet what difference is there between us?" Her voice shrilled a little, shaky and waspish with passion. "What difference is there except that she could get a divorce, she could do the thing legally—God, how I hate that word! She could keep the rags of her reputation such as they are, to cover herself up with. And I couldn't! I can't! I'm naked. That's it—naked!"

"Sh-h!" he warned. "You don't have to be telling your troubles to a waiter."

"What's a waiter?" she demanded. "They aren't human, not if they know their business. They're only machines that bring your food to you and carry the scraps away."

"Come to think of it, I believe you're right," he agreed, relieved



breath—just two words, but even so they made a prayer and they made a curse.

that the dialogue should have taken this tack, and informed by a side glance that the man serving them was discreetly betaking himself behind the screen, retreating on some errand and apparently oblivious to what just had been said. "This fellow of ours has the trick of obliterating himself absolutely. Appears to be a dummy, too. Haven't heard a chirp out of him so far. You're right, though, Dot. Who ever sees a waiter's face? Nobody. Who remembers afterwards how one looked? Nobody. All you see is a smeared-up cotton glove shoving dishes at you, and maybe the lower part of a gummy vest and, if you look further down, a pair of fallen arches. They all seem to have flat feet, don't they? But your knowledge of 'em ends there. It's funny about waiters, isn't it?"

His words stirred the woman to a faint curiosity. She turned her head. Within this brief space of time the man had reappeared bearing a tray burdened with covered platters. He had his back to her, though; all that her pausing glance at him revealed was the rear of a white head; that and a shoulder which sagged with a sloven droop and, for high points, the burnishings on the sleeves of his frayed jacket where, at elbows and wrists, they were polished and shiny from long wear and shellacked with stearic encrustations, like dried scabs. Patina is to be desired in antique furniture but on the seams of the garments that are worn by those who tend our wants of appetite its gloss is not especially attractive to the discriminating, or shall we say the finicky? She gave a little shudder of disgust.

"Riffraff," she murmured. "Riffraff to match the rest of the setting. And to match us, too. Just trash, that's all."

Food was now placed before her—oysters on the shell. She ate one oyster and stabbed idly with her fork at the other five, her brooding eyes on her plate. A cork plopped to freedom behind her, and next at her elbow appeared champagne, fizzed up and foaming in a small goblet. She drank of it but not with the zest which her *vis-à-vis* displayed.

In a quiet between them that seemed clotty and heavy-laden with a mated misery their supper progressed to its next course.

Theirs, though, was the core of the eddy; just outside was the whirlpool. From beyond the thin partition the clashing notes of

a steadily mounting tumult came filtering in—banging of dishes and of table-silver; a babble of many tongues, mostly patterning in mutually, like shingles that overlap on a roof, and only now and then one harsher vocalization rising above the rest; presently there ripped forth a feminine shriek, vulgar and senseless and soused, and on top of this a strident remonstrance from someone else. Quite near at hand a muddled voice began saying, "Oh you New Year! Oh you lil' ole New Year!" saying it over and over again so that the sound flapped with a harassing regularity like the beatings of a monotonous paddle.

ALL at once the woman's endurance snapped in two.

"Guy, for Heaven's sake!" She flared at him violently. "Do you have to sit there all evening moping like a sulky bear in a cage? Don't you know we're supposed to be enjoying ourselves—supposed to be entertaining each other? That's good—that's awfully good—entertaining each other!" She laughed a mirthless laugh.

He shrugged moodily, making no other reply.

"That's it, play the injured innocence rôle. Oh, sometimes you'd try the patience of a saint!"

"Think so? Well, as to that I couldn't say, never having lived with one." He matched her shrewishness with his rising choler. "What's ailing you now? It'd take a lightning-change artist to keep up with you and your tantrums. I'm worn out from trying to do it." He crumpled his napkin into a hard ball and cast it among the table-litter.

"Oh, Guy, Guy!" she lamented, and now her little fit of anger was lifted as swiftly as it had descended and her eyes were not raging but were desperate and hunted eyes. "What's the use of our trying to go on together like this? Why don't you quit? I'd rather you would. Honestly I would—I swear it!"

"Dot," he said, "you don't mean that? You know you don't mean it. And I know you don't."

"I do mean it," she persisted wanly. "What's the good for either of us as things are? Why, you could have your friends back. We used to have friends—the real kind, not the kind we have now, the kind that we buy with free (Continued on page 104)



This street of Gallipolis, Ohio, has been paved since McIntyre saw it twenty years ago, and the Park Central has a new mosaic floor. Otherwise it is much the same.

That WAS Happy New Year

By O. O. MCINTYRE

NEW YEAR'S DAY in Gallipolis, Ohio, where I spent much of my boyhood, was no different I suppose from that of other towns but it holds a glamour that time does not erase.

Somehow I have a feeling I'd like to leave Manhattan's hectic New Year's night and go back to Gallipolis to watch the old year out and the new year in.

Gallipolis is a picturesque little town on the banks of the Ohio. It was settled by the French and suggests Versailles in miniature. It has a public square on the river front, a leading business street, and back of that four wide avenues lined with trees whose branches interlace.

There are cheerful, comfortable homes and at the north and south ends the town straggles off into peaceful, rolling farmlands. Gallipolis has never had one of those "Bigger Burg" movements. It does not grow. After you live in New York many years you begin to appreciate that.

It is a substantial town of solid citizenry who sprang from those who founded it. Save for a few shacks across the creek and beyond the railroad tracks there is no show of poverty. If you go over the hill to the poor-house you find very few tenants.

We used to look forward in Gallipolis to a "white Christmas" for there was fine coasting on Academy Hill and skating on the creek. In a like manner we looked forward to a sunny New Year's Day for we all made the rounds of New Year's calls.

These calls were great treats for us youngsters even if we did,

as Uncle Henry Bell used to say, have "to lard our hair and pin back our ears."

Aunt Annie Adams always had a platter of fresh baked cookies—spiced on top with nuts—in the parlor. Grandma Heisner gave us toothsome bits of freshly pulled taffy, and Dr. Fred Cromley gave those who dropped in a stick of red and white peppermint candy—streaked like a barber's pole.

Those were the days of saloons and through the swing doors we had peeps at the mysterious soap-frosted bar mirrors wishing all patrons the cheer of the season. There were pungent whiffs of other cheer—the now deceased twins, Tom and Jerry.

Christmas decorations were still hanging in home windows, but they would be brightened up with fresh ribbon and tissue paper bells.

There was not much business on Second Street the day before the New Year. Folks were getting ready for the morrow. It was a day everybody dressed up. Even Harry Maxon would wear a necktie.

On ordinary days the only man in Gallipolis who wore a plug hat was General George House, of the Old Reliable Insurance Agency, but on New Year's Day Dunk Devac, the saddler and town historian, counted as many as ten.

There was generally something extra in the way of entertainment on New Year's Eve. We either had the Swiss Bell Ringers at the Methodist Church, or Ikey Kaufman, the manager of the opera house, would present some strong melodrama like "Human Hearts."

Afterward a few people would go to Mrs. Jenny's ice-cream parlor, but the majority went directly home. They lighted lamps and waited in the front parlor for Ab Atkinson to ring the Presbyterian Church bell heralding the New Year. A half hour later there wasn't a light in Gallipolis.

Gallipolis arose early for New Year's Day. Fleet White, the colored porter at the Park Central, held the early rising record for that day until he was crippled by rheumatism.

By seven o'clock all the town characters were at the post-office corner to greet you, for it was the custom when they said "Happy New Year" to give them a nickel or a dime. They didn't beg. It was just our town's way of showing a slight appreciation of the harmless old fellows who constituted the odd job men of the town.

Among those we would find gathered there were Modock, the bootblack; Baz Cliff from the coal float; Jimmy Lucas, who in his cups called himself "the axle tree of the world"; Tip Stevens, who lost a leg flipping trains; Ed Oskey, who swept out the city jail; and Uncle Enoch, who mowed front yards.

Afterward they departed for the saloons on Court Street to celebrate. "Peeney" Fox would have a chuck-a-luck game going in Andy Archman's, and some of the roysterers from Bullskin and Yellowtown would drive in for a rip roaring time. Generally, however, the day was as quiet as a Sunday afternoon.

New Year's was celebrated at the churches. Each had a special program and at Sunday school the pupils were presented with oranges in net sacks. After church came the real big event—the family dinner.

The Gatewoods, the Mullineaux, the Vances, the Bovies, the Hallidays, the McMullins, the Cherringtons, the Aleshires, the Cadots, and the Henkings had as many as twenty guests at first and second tables.

As Editor Sibley would write in "The Tribune" next day: "every table in Gallipolis fairly groaned under the load of good things to eat." Such dinners! Turkey with stuffings and cranberry sauce, fried sweet and mashed potatoes, pickled peaches, scalloped oysters, apple butter, currant bread, hot biscuits, thick cream gravy, fruit cake, mince pie and cookies and home-made vanilla ice-cream!

Afterward the calls would begin. Children scrubbed clean, fathers in frock coats and mothers in rustling silks moved from one home to another.

In the late afternoon, if the weather permitted, those who were not enjoying late afternoon naps would go to the public square to hear a band concert or perhaps an address by Colonel John L. Vance.

It was a gathering that would seem incongruous in this jazz age: Pappy Pitrat, the old French scholar, with his heavy cane and cape; Miss Eliza Sanns, a delicate bit of lavender and old lace; Colonel Cruetzet with his snow white shock of hair; Mr. Hutchinson, the hardware merchant, who wore stiff white shirts on weekdays; C. D. Kerr, the druggist, whom Editor Sibley called the best dressed man in town.

Most of these people today are "sleeping, sleeping on the hill." It has been nearly twenty years now since I have seen Gallipolis. They tell me of a new high school building that occupies two blocks.

Back Street has been paved. A new bridge spans the little Chicamaugua. The Park Central has a mosaic floor. There are concrete walks in the public square and Billy Schartz's cigar store is now "The Smoke Shop."

I want to go back again but I hope there have not been too many changes. I like to think of the tolling evening church bells, the cows being driven home from pasture, the shrill whistle of the Hocking Valley train at six-fifteen as she rounded the curve at Fox's dairy.

I hope the older men are still sitting out front on the big scales at Neal's Mill at twilight and that the motor age has not forever stilled that doleful "ting-tang-ting-gg!" floating out from the anvils of the blacksmith shops.

I hope to go over at noon and join the little

crowd that used to gather around the iron pump in the lower end of the public square. And I cherish a hope that the rusty old tin cup is there on the same brass chain.

I hope "Banty" Merriman still has a place for me to loaf in the back room of his jewelry store and that Harry Maddy will join me in one of our old walks up through Maple Shade past the fair grounds.

I want to keep always my memories of those dead and gone days when my world was young—when Karl Hall and I dug a cave under the river bank; when Alfie Resener and I smoked our first corn silk cigaret; when Harry Maxon and I set fire to McCormack's haymow; when Ned Deletombe and I were taken to the Justice of Peace by Constable Jack Dufour for swimming naked in the creek.

I want to live over again a New Year's Day on which young men and women do not awaken with aching heads and burning thirsts. I want to hear the venerable pastor of our church pronounce his New Year blessing. I want to hear Aunt Nell Bovie play the pipe organ again with those sweet, sad rising, swelling and tremulous notes. I want to see the old cherry tree where Grandma McIntyre took me to explain that my mother had left us to go to Heaven. I want to stroll over State Street to see the little ivy-clad porch where "the only girl" and I brushed lips in the first kiss.

And perhaps, most of all, I want to drop into Aunt Annie Adams's for a freshly baked cookie!



All that O. O. McIntyre asked of the world when he was eleven years old were his dog and a holiday from school. The dog, says an inscription on the back of this photograph, weighed 206 pounds and the boy 80 pounds.



RE

A MAN at the Crossroads

THE ocean rolled in placid sweeps to where a gaudy sunset rioted across the horizon. Aboard the old tramp Farallone, the men lounged about the deck; it was the quiet time in late afternoon when only the ghost of a soft breeze touched the sails. Within the half hour Wong, the Chink cook, would tap the tinkly triangle for chow. Squatted on a hatch cover, a Gugu coaxed soft strains from a wheezy concertina and crooned a Malay love song.

Gus Lindstrom, sprawled across a coil of rope, stirred impatiently at the melody. The accustomed smile was absent from his young face; there was a fleeting sadness that stood out starkly for an instant and then was hid from view.

"Thinkin' of Fifi, kid?" Big Alex Swenson spoke softly.

Gus's smile flashed across his bronzed face and stirred the blue of his eyes to a sparkling cynicism. Him thinkin' of Fifi? Huh!

"I tol' yuh I was through with her when I left Surabaya."

"She loves yuh, kid." Big Alex was but a few years older than the tall blond youngster who lounged on the coil of rope; he'd sorta looked after Gus since they were small boys, though; he'd seemed always to take that older-brother attitude. "Fifi turned down Van Doern, the Inspector, fer yuh, Gus. She could've had her choice of marryin' any of them rich Dutchmen. Wasn't a girl in Java that could've done better 'f she'd wanted to; but she couldn't see nobody but you."

"Oh, sure. Say, I loved her too, didn't I?" Gawamighty, why did Alex have tuh keep talkn' about Fifi? Couldn't a fella

get fed up with too much love? Just 'cause their families had come from the Old Country together when him an' Alex was kids —'cause they'd lived on adjoining farms on Puget Sound an' shipped on their first voyage together wasn't no reason why Big Alex should butt intuh his private affairs. Six years since he'd gone tuh sea an' he knew how tuh look out fer himself. He was almost sorry that he'd met Alex in Surabaya after a separation of three years, and had shipped for Puget Sound with him on the Farallone.

"If yuh loved her what'd yuh leave her for? Yuh had a good job there on the docks in Surabaya. From what she tol' me, yuh'd promised tuh marry her an' quit the sea. Yuh could've, done a lot worse, Gus. A pretty girl like Fifi, with her own little shop an' all."

"Say, fella, I can look out fer myself. If yuh was so crazy about her why didn't *yuh* marry her?"

"Yuh know why. She couldn't see nobody but you. An' anyway I'm goin' back tuh the on'y girl I'd ever want. Hilda. By Gaw, Gus, wait'll yuh see her. I never seen such hair. Gold . . . pure gold."

The blond man's eyes shone.

"Gold hair, huh? Say, that's what I like. I'm sick o' brunettes. Oh, them Dutch girls is yella-haired—but they're dumb. Anyway, I didn't get much chance at 'em with Fifi around. She cared too much, Alex. Can yuh 'magine when she found I'd shipped away with you? Gawd, I bet she cried her heart out. I wish she hadn't cared so. I hate hurtin' her."

By
Belle Burns
Gromer



Illustrations

by

Dean Cornwell

"Yuh didn't do right tuh leave her that way, kid. No good'll come of it. To steal too, tuh take her batik sarong; why that was like stealing a part of her."

"Lissen, Alex; I've tol' yuh a dozen times I left a pile o' florins that'll put her eyes out. Near all the coin I had. I paid her fer what I took. An' I didn' tell her I was goin' . . . Well, I didn' like tuh see her hurt, I guess."

"Yuh know yuh couldn' pay her fer the sarong. Why, it'd belonged tuh her folks fer generations. She was awful proud of it. 'Member the first night yuh took me tuh see her an' she showed it tuh me? She was awful proud of it."

She had set a lot of store by the sarong, little Fifi the *nonna*, daughter of a Javanese *tandak*-girl and a French trader. Her father had left her the small tobacco shop when he had died and she had inherited a love of the theatrical from the dancer mother; once a week in the

tiny garden behind the shop she gave a *wajang*, a puppet show of the native legends. Under the banana palms there were small benches

and visitors to Surabaya came frequently to sit about the pocket-handkerchief of lawn and watch Fifi's puppets perform. The girl had won a bit of fame that was steadily growing. Always when she gave the *wajang* she wore her most treasured possession, the batik sarong that had belonged to the Solo princess, her mother's mother. Her black hair drawn smoothly back and knotted at the nape of her slim neck, her great brown eyes flashing with the thrill of manipulating the puppets, she would strike the golden bell from the temple of Boro-Budur to announce the beginning of the performance and the sarong about her slender figure would flash and color as she moved. The

blending hues of the batik had made her stand out like a brilliant bird against the smooth green pads of the banana palms. It was this treasure that the laughing-eyed sailor had taken when he had left her and Surabaya for good and all.

"What'd yuh haf tuh take it fer, Gus?" Big Alex probed on.

The younger man touched the case with the mother-of-pearl inlay that rested under his hand. His eyes were serious.

"Say, honest, Alex, yuh know I ain't no saint, but I swear I wouldn't 'a' taken Fifi's sarong 'f I could 'a' helped it. By Gaw, I swear the thing kinda haunts me. Somehow, I want it. I want tuh give it tuh a girl I'm goin' tuh marry some day. I ain't met her yet, I guess . . . I ain't strong fer the sea . . . I want tuh settle down some time 'fore long. I want a girl with gold hair—like you got. Say, I'd like tuh give my girl this sarong."

The blending hues of the sarong that had belonged to a Solo princess made her stand out like a brilliant bird.

A Man at the Crossroads

Honest, Alex . . . there's somethin' about it . . . I can't tell yuh. Look . . ."

He opened the case and the scarf caught in the bit of breeze and billowed in his big hands like a live thing. The sunset was a blaze of rose and gold, now; it shone on the batik and touched to flame the beaten silver of the border. It was a Pekalongan; birds of brilliant plumage and hibiscus and pale blue convolvulus blossoms had been tinted into the soft linen with a colorful brush. Time had mellowed and enriched the whole until even the beaten silver border was soft and pliant and swung in graceful folds.

Gus's eyes clouded . . . He always seemed to see Fifi in this radiant drapery. The thing appeared, sometimes—the way it twisted and billowed in graceful circlings—as though her spirit were in it. He shook himself impatiently.

"Funny fer a fella like me tuh want such a thing, eh?"

"Tain't funny when yuh know yuh as I do, Gus. Yuh ain't like other fellas. Everybody likes yuh; men an' women both. Yuh ain't never had no back-handers from life. That's what I think's yer trouble. It's all been too easy—Fifi an' all. Why, she fell fer you when she could 'a' chosen men with money an' a good position. It's always been like that with you . . . Seems tuh me ye're at a kinda turnin' point, now. I can't help but tell yuh that I think yuh done a rotten thing tuh Fifi . . . An' I think yer doin' another rotten thing that yuh ain't tol' me

about, yet . . . Yuh ain't really bad, kid, but I guess yer comin' dam' near to it."

The youngster's face flamed to the straight thick line of his hair. Alex knew, then.

"Well . . . I guess it ain't yer business . . . all the fellas make a little on the side that way. I tol' yuh I wanted tuh settle down an' I haf' tuh have a stake, don't I?"

"Yeah? Well you'll settle down in the pen if yuh don't let Chineese Charlie alone. Oh, sure, I know. Didn't I see that half-caste from Samarang slip yuh the stuff fer Charlie before we sailed? I knew it was opium. I know that dirty whelp; I've seen him slippin' his stuff tuh the men too often. Say, kid, I wasn't goin' tuh say nothin' but we been friends fer a long time. This smugglin' game'll get yuh nothin' but bad company an' a stretch at McNiel's if ye're caught. Over the side with that stuff yuh got cached away somewheres an' ferget yuh ever heard of that Chink in Seattle."

That was Alex, always lookin' out fer him; yuh'd think he wasn't growed up. Fifi was the same way; fer all that she was younger and so small in comparison, she always seemed tuh be watchin' over him. He hadn't liked that.

"Lord, Alex, yuh sure got a preachin' streak on. Say, I'm on'y doin' what half the other fellas pull tuh make a little on the side. I'm due tuh haul down a good bit from Charlie on what I'll bring in this time. I liked bein' ashore them months in Surabaya; I'm goin' tuh buy a farm on Puget Sound with what I make on this trip. I put all I saved intuh this stuff; I ought tuh make my pile on it."

"Suit yerself, Gus; but mark my words. There's a back-hander comin' tuh yuh from life an' it's goin' tuh make a man 'r a bum out of yuh. I wouldn't say which."

Two sunsets later the Farallone was secured alongside her dock in Seattle harbor. A while after, Gus walked nonchalantly off with his sea-bag, in its depths concealed a small fortune in the tael of opium. Alex shook his head as he watched the youngster win by the Customs Officers with his usual gay assurance. Not that he was sorry that the kid had not been caught, but that the blow would be all the harder when the time came that he could no longer dodge the consequences of his folly. He hastened along and caught up with the younger man.

"I'm goin' out tuh Smith's Cove tuh Hilda's. Wanta come along?"

"I'd sure like tuh meet yer girl, fella, but . . . Well, I'd like tuh see Charlie an' get rid of this stuff. I ain't so crazy about keepin' it around."

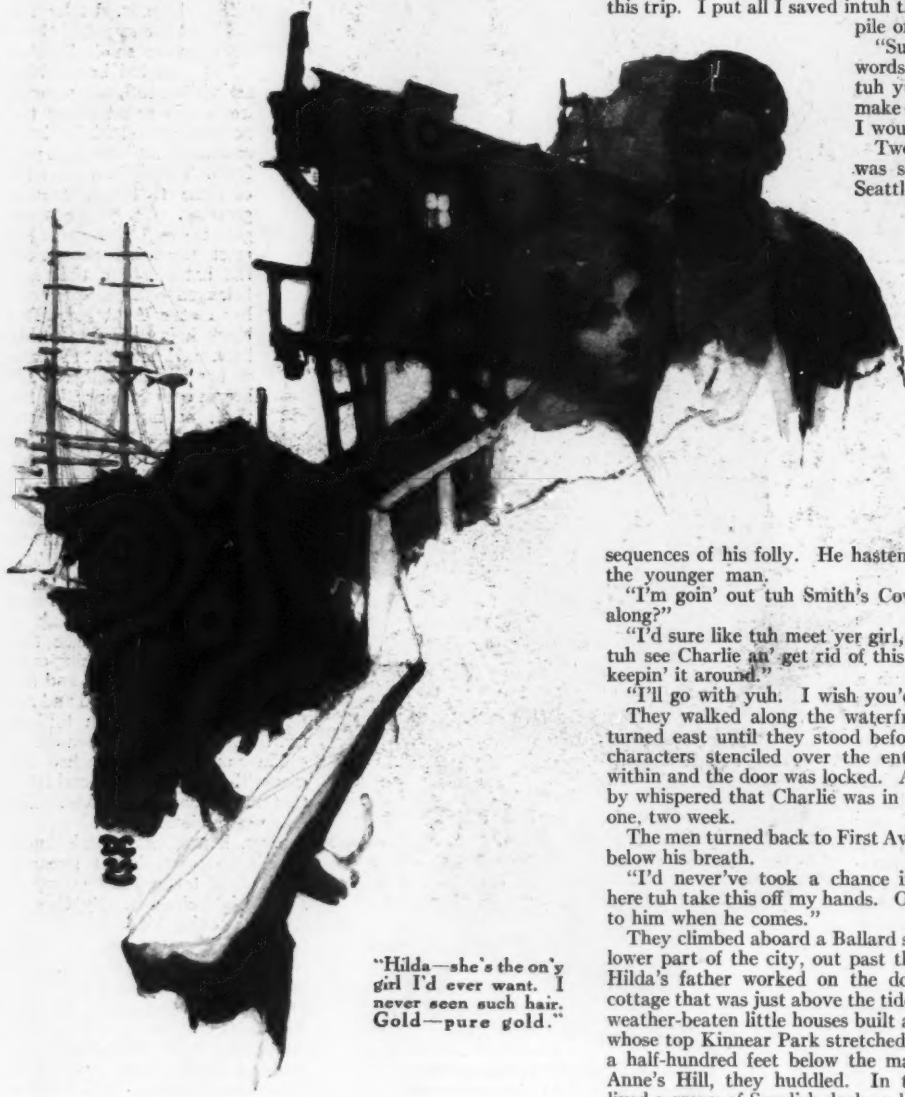
"I'll go with yuh. I wish you'd let him alone, though."

They walked along the waterfront to King Street and then turned east until they stood before a small shop with Chinese characters stenciled over the entryway. There was no light within and the door was locked. An ancient Chinaman shuffling by whispered that Charlie was in Flisco. No come back mebbe one, two week.

The men turned back to First Avenue; Gus swore picturesquely below his breath.

"I'd never've took a chance if I'd thought he wouldn't be here tuh take this off my hands. Oh, well, I'll lay low an' get this to him when he comes."

They climbed aboard a Ballard streetcar and rode through the lower part of the city, out past the mills and to Smith's Cove. Hilda's father worked on the docks there. They lived in a cottage that was just above the tide-line; there was a row of these weather-beaten little houses built against the foot of the bluff on whose top Kinnear Park stretched its rolling green lawns. Only a half-hundred feet below the mansions of the rich or Queen Anne's Hill, they huddled. In this battered little row there lived a group of Swedish dock and mill workers, a community in themselves.



"Hilda—she's the on'y girl I'd ever want. I never seen such hair. Gold—pure gold."



Chinese Charlie's door was locked. Gus swore softly. "If I'd known this I'd never've took the chance."

Hilda answered the knock on the door of the second cottage with the faded gray shingles. Gus caught his breath though his teeth in a gasp when he saw her. Oh the golden girl! The golden hair! It was not until later that he thought how differently Fifi would have greeted him after an absence. This lovely creature had let Big Alex kiss her . . . Ah, but Fifi would have wept and laughed through her tears and returned his kisses. Oh, well, fair women were just a little colder; that was it. All

the same he hated to see the kinda hurt look that flashed across Alex's face for a second. Say, they didn't make many like Big Alex; a good friend an' a regular fella, he was.

But as the evening passed Gus forgot his friend. All of the neighbors had come in to greet the big sailor; the coffee and the Swedish cakes circulated constantly; there was much laughter and song and the occasional strains of an accordion. Through it all Gus's eyes scarcely left Hilda. Gold girl! Golden hair!



Gus had spent much of his time in Surabaya with little Fifi, the beautiful brown-eyed

She was a tall slender creature, almost as tall as Gus. Her eyes were pale—gray eyes, maybe light blue; he couldn't decide. She had a soft sort of way of lookin' at a fella an' then suddenly narrowin' her lids. Say, it was kinda . . . kinda leadin' him on, like. And her hair. It was the style then to wear it in dozens of little puffs and curls above a softly waved pompadour. Gee, but hers was pretty; how wonderful it must be to see all those curls hangin' in a golden glory over her curved shoulders. A shiver of delight shook him in its grip. Golden girl!

During the evening Big Alex went to his duffle bag and produced the gifts that he had brought from the Orient. For Hilda there was a jade necklace and a brocade purse with a golden dragon and carved ivory balls on the handle. She seemed mildly pleased; Fifi would've jumped up an' down with joy an' kissed him in that soft, snugly way she had, Gus thought. She wouldn't've had eyes for anyone else but him, either. Her soft glances were always for him. Say where'd he get that, all the

time thinkin' about what Fifi'd do? He shook himself impatiently; he was through with that part of his life.

The Swedish girls and the children and the big, clumsy men were all exclaiming over the gifts. Alex hadn't forgotten anyone, even to the smallest. Inspired by his friend's success, Gus brought forth the batik sarong. He had no presents to give, but they would like to look at this rare thing that he owned.

"It's pretty. Say, what is that thing—batik sarong? Like we call a scarf, eh?" Hilda's softly slurring tones delighted him.

"A sarong's what the Javanese girls wear fer a skirt, an' sometimes fer a whole dress. See? Hol' still an' I'll show yuh."

He swung the drapery about her slim waist, folded it in a wide pleat in the front and caught it securely in place with a deft twist. Fifi had taught him that trick. But the thought of Fifi faded when he stood so near and breathed the perfume of Hilda's hair.



daughter of a Javanese *tandak*-girl and a French trader.

"Batik—that's the pattern that's put on by coverin' the linen with wax in the design they want, dippin' it in the dye, an' then paintin' in the flowers an' birds in the different colors they like after the wax is scraped off. Pretty, ain't it? This belonged to a princess once; she was what they call *srimpi*, that means a dancer to the Sultan."

Hilda ran the soft folds of the silver border through her long fingers. There was a strangely acquisitive gleam in the pale eyes.

"Why didn't you bring me somethin' like this, eh, Alex? Somethin' for a princess?" She laughed but there was little mirth to take the sting from her words. She turned to Gus.

"Why'd you bring this back? A bach'ler fella like you?"

"Some day I'll give it to the girl I fall for, see? She's goin' tuh be a golden girl . . . too."

He had a feeling that Big Alex was staring at him but he didn't care. He was under the spell of strangely luring eyes.

In the days that followed Gus Lindstrom was the plaything

of his moods and emotions. He and Alex were "batching" in the cottage of a fisherman who was away on a voyage. It rested on the side of a hill back of the row of houses where Hilda and her father lived. Tall maples covered all the steep sides of the bluff and the cottage was almost hidden by the thick branches.

Gus was glad of that. The tael of opium were beginning to wear on his nerves. Every day or two he had gone to Chinnee Charlie's but no one ever seemed able to tell him just when the Chinaman would return from Frisco. The last time he had knocked vainly at the little shop, a furtive-looking loungeer in square-toed shoes and a low-set derby had followed him when he turned away. A dick, prob'ly. Gus had thought to give the fly-cop the slip, but once since he had seen him hanging about the neighborhood of the bluff cottage.

He had determined then that the opium must be hidden away from the cabin; on a sunny morning, he found just the place. Straight up the bluff from the back of the house, there was a flight of steps made of short lengths of rustic logs set in

the earth. They had been placed there so many years before that the grass and mosses had all but covered them and they were scarcely distinguishable. At the top of the rustic flight was a giant maple that loomed grandly over all the others. Quite by chance, Gus wandered up the mossy steps and swinging up into the lower branches of the tree found the flat and protected space that lay where the great limbs joined to the trunk. He could stretch his length in this hidden place. He rested his back against the maple and lay for a while looking out over the bay. He could see through the thick branches to the cottage below, but no one from there would dream of his presence in the tree.

His thoughts went to Hilda as they always seemed to do of late. He wondered how long Big Alex would stand for their growing intimacy. Well, he was crazy about her; she liked him, too, he guessed, the way she favored him and slighted Alex on every occasion. He s'posed it'd come to a show-down before long. He'd always thought a lot of Alex but if Hilda (Continued on page 134)



By William Rose Benét

The Negro Cowboy

I HAD a hawse named Golden Rivah,
Golden Rivah was mah hawse's name;
Ride 'm on de range, you could ride fo' evah.
Ride fo' evah twell de Judgement came.

Foot was light as a leaf afallin',
Haid held high lak a wil' elk deer;
Down in de corral you could heah 'm callin',
Heah 'm calling when mah step drew neah.

Eye so bright as a quail's ashinin',
Big, sof', brown lak an antelope doe;
Whirl aroun' yo knee when de ropes was twinin',
Ropes was twinin' in de round-up show.

Fork 'm, an' you moved lak a cloud aflowin':
Laigs had springs lak an ol' jack-hare;
Eahs afflickah, an' his nose was knowin',
Nose was knowin' all de smells was theah.

*O banjo, banjo, plink-a-plink-a-plink,
Banjo strum an' strum:
Tell de boys
How Golden Rivah
Run to Kingdom Come!*

Now lak as not you boys all know
Ah rode de herd th'ough sun an' snow;
Ah rode de herd one starry night
When all de sky was afull of light.

Steers was res'less as could be;
Golden Rivah nudge mah knee;
"Dere's boun' to be, onless you heed,"
He says to me, "a big stampede."

An' ah leans an' ah says to Golden Rivah,
Golden Rivah was mah hawse's name.
"Comes to de wuss, we kin run fo' evah
Run fo' evah lak a flyin' flame!"

"Ah knows you, hawse, you is young an' willin':
Trus' ol' Sam'll keep you safe an' soun'!"
Den de herd riz up an' all astarted millin',
Started millin', an' dey won't lay down.

Hoof up, pawin', ev'y horn atossin',
Eyeballs rollin' lak de sea is white;
Trot, turn, trot; nevah heed yo bossin';
Good Lawd knowin' what dey smells by night!

Rawhide crackin', we was ridin', ridin',
Herdin', callin'—but it ain't no use.
Heah come thundah th'ough de dahk astridin',
Heah come lightnin'—an' de herd bus' loose!

Ah press mah knee intuh Golden Rivah,
Trottin' all ashivah th'ough de pourin' rain:
"Quick now, hawse, you gotta prove yo clevah!"
Dat herd come arumble lak a railroad train!

*O banjo, banjo, plink-a-plunk, plink-a-plunk,
Banjo, pro-ceed;
Tell de boys how Golden Rivah
Run dat stampede!*

We went so fas' ah could not think,
We zipped th'ough black lak a bucket o' ink;
The win' was ablowin' mighty guns;
Dat herd run lak de thundah runs.

Low on de plain a line o' light
Seemed agrowin' on mah sight.
"Good Lawd," ah prays, "O save ouah souls—
An' please watch out fo' gopher holes!"

An' ah leans an' ah prays to Golden Rivah,
"Golden Rivah, ef you gits us th'ough,
Ain't gwine be no bit ner rope fo' evah,
Bridle, saddle, ner no cinch on you!"

Den he laid so flat ah was yankin' leathah;
De rumble o' de herd in de rain was drown';
We flew lak a comic—hey! we split de weatheh;
Bus' th'ough clouds and colors inta sight an' soun'

Of a big camp-meetin' undah cliffs o' glohry
Lak de soun' o' Gab'iel on his golden hawn;
Blue o' smoke arisin' lak an ol'-time story,
An' de aih all di'mon', and de sto'm done gone!



Illustration
by
Herbert M.
Stoops

An' ah knows—ah knows—an' ah leans aspeakin'
To mah hawse, 'at whickahs, lak he tryin' fo' to say,
"Oh ah's sorry, Sam!" But ah feels 'm weaken,
Fo'-foot pawin' in de proud ol' way.

So ah flung mah laig offa Golden Rivah,
Ah stood beside 'm whah dat rivah run;
It's bright, all bright, but ah's all ashivah,
All am blackness whah ah seen de sun.

Big Chief lep onto Golden Rivah,
(O Golden Rivah, it's mah hawse's name!)
Chief drew an arrer fum's buckskin quivah,
Lined it at de sun in a flight lak flame.

Man! Dem tents an' wigwams, dey uz monst'ous scary!
Ah seed speahs an' wah-paint, heahed 'em shout an' cry;
Fo' we jolted to a trot on de Golden Prairie
Whah de Injuns go when de Injuns die!

"O Lawd," ah remahks, "you is mis-di-rected,
Reffunce to de folks ah had wished to see!
Askin' Yo Pahdon, dis am onexpected,
Awful onexpected to mah hawse an' me!"

*O Ban-jo,
High an' low
Ring an' sing an' soun'!
Tell de boys whatall ah know
O' de Happy Huntin' Groun'!*

Fo' lak as not you nevah seen
Green lak dem trees an' grass was green;
Ah seed 'em Injuns eight foot high
Ride piebal' ponies th'ough 'at sky;

Ah seed big herds o' buffalo
Preamble on dem plains below;
A chief in feathehs lak a tree
Says, "How!" an' hol's his han' to me.

Den he casts his eye ovah Golden Rivah
Standin' nose aquivah wid his haid held high,
Snuffin' at de breeze blowin' cool fo'evah,
Cool fo'evah undah shinin' sky.

Up along de track o' dat flyin' arrer,
High an' high dey went ridin' in de blue,
Feathehs all afluttah on a trail so narrer,—
Sky cracked lightnin'—an' it let 'em th'ough!

*O Ban-jo,
Sof an' low!
Banjo, be dumb!
You've tol' de boys
How Golden Rivah
Come to Kingdom Come!*

An' lak as not you boys all feel
To lose a hawse 'at knowed yo heel,
To lose a hawse 'at knowed yo han'
Is trouble hahd to ondahstan'.

Ah foun' mahse'f down in de draw,
It felt lak ah had bus' mah jaw;
Ah riz mahse'f an' took a stare;
'Co'se, wan't no Golden Prairie theah!

... Foot as light as a leaf afallin',
Haid hel' high lak a wil' elk deer;
Down in de corral you could heah 'm callin',
Heah 'm callin' when mah step drew neah.

Listen! Is it him? Is it Golden Rivah?
Golden Rivah was mah hawse's namy:
Up an' down de range we would ride fo'evah,
Ride fo'evah—But de Jedgement came!

The Shock of

The Story of a Failure

Illustrations by

His literary agent, a smartly dressed young man named Mr. Pratt, revealed the staggering figures. He sat in Paul Jasper's bed sitting-room on the first floor of the lodging house in Royal Avenue, Chelsea, talking miracles.

"It's sweeping the United States like a tidal wave. From New York to San Francisco. The women are crazy about it. The clergy are making it a text for sermons. It has reached two hundred thousand copies up to the end of March. Magnificent!"

"How much will that amount to in money?" asked Jasper, looking more scared than any man who has been favored by fortune, but trying to keep his voice steady.

"Let's see," said the agent, "... two hundred thousand at fifteen percent on the published price, less our commission ... roughly, ten thousand pounds."

"Good heavens!" said Paul Jasper faintly.

"With the British Empire rights plus the film rights—they ought to be pretty big—and translation rights, you ought to make twenty thousand pounds out of this book. More, very likely."

"Incredible!" said Jasper.

"Then there's your next book," said Mr. Pratt brightly. "All the publishers are after it like hounds in full scent. Of course we shall hold out for a big sum in advance."

Jasper glanced round his bed sitting-room with sudden puckers about his eyes and lips. The literary agent followed his glance and gave a sympathetic smile. The room was not luxurious. The bed in the corner by the fireplace was covered with a rather dirty counterpane. The red cloth on a table by the window was ink-splashed. The bookshelves, stuffed with old volumes, looked handmade, and were cheaply stained. On the walls were some rather good etchings in black frames, but the wall paper had begun to peel.

"You'll be moving to different quarters now, I suppose," Mr. Pratt continued. "Well, my warmest congratulations, Mr. Jasper. That novel of yours is a giddy masterpiece. I love every word of it"

"It's trash," said Jasper. "The worst thing I've ever written. Thank heaven I didn't put it under my own name."

He spoke irritably, thinking of all those other books of his which he had written with a sense of art, for which he had lived a life of self-denial, poverty-stricken, despised by his own people as the failure of the family, with an utter refusal in his soul to pander to popular taste ... until that "shocker" when he had hauled down his flag for once.

Mr. Pratt looked surprised by the author's contempt for his own work—surprised and amused.

Then Jasper jerked out a sudden question.

"I can't help it, Paul. My pluck's gone. I'm down and out this time."

JASPER was frightened by his good fortune. He was staggered by the sudden shock of it, so that when the first revelation of its greatness came to him in clear cold figures his haggard thought-lined face became extremely white as though he had been accused of murder.

He was conscious of annoyance as well as fear. It was utterly preposterous! The novel he had written as a "pot-boiler," so ashamed of its sentimentality and style that he had published it under another name—"Mark Fisher"—was romping through editions as fast as it could be printed. The books he had written with love and art, with ruthless sincerity, with agony and sweat of mind, had been dismal failures. Some of the critics had praised them, but the big public had left them unread. They had never earned enough to give him a decent income. He had had a hard fight to keep out of debt and had denied himself the little luxuries and graces of life—holidays abroad, the English countryside, good clothes, his favorite brand of tobacco, theaters. He had strained the loyalty of the girl to whom he had been engaged for three years without the slightest chance of providing a decent home for her. Now fortune had come with this rubbishy novel, as he thought it—"The Curse of Poverty" by "Mark Fisher."

Success

By Sir PHILIP GIBBS

Caught Napping by Fame

James H. Crank

"When can I touch some of that money? Just to know it's real."

Mr. Pratt looked thoughtful.

"Strictly speaking the accounts are settled in July up to the previous March. But of course if you want something now we can arrange that—easily. You can draw on us. I quite understand."

He glanced round the bed sitting-room again as though that explained everything.

"I could do with a little," said Jasper nervously. "Would fifty pounds be too much? At once, I mean."

"Five hundred, if you like," replied Mr. Pratt, as though he owned all the wealth of the world.

He rose and leaned on his silver-knobbed stick.

"I'll have a check made out. Also the contract for the new novel. Delighted to look after your interests, Mr. Jasper. We're going to do big business with your work."

He shook hands heartily, and Jasper heard his brisk steps down the little hall and the sharp bang of the front door.

The author of "The Curse of Poverty" stood motionless for a time on a threadbare patch in the center of his carpet. His thin hands clutched the lapels of his old blue serge jacket. His head with its disorderly hair—a little bald on top—was slightly raised, and he stared out of the window across the room not seeing the black chimney pots over the way but some vision of life, past or to come. Presently he raised his arms above his head at full length and spoke to himself in a loud harsh whisper.

"Success . . . Wealth . . . Fame . . . The beauty of life . . . Love and marriage . . . The power to pay back, to give, to be generous . . . Almighty luck . . . And a home for Edna."

He laughed to himself, and spoke aloud again, as men do who lead lonely lives.

"It's devilish funny! . . . 'The failure of the family,' that's what they called me—all my prosperous relatives, my selfish sisters with their rich, fat husbands; my father with his hatred of art, his contempt for my work and ideals. 'A failure! Poor old Paul, with his ink-stained fingers and shabby clothes, and his lodging somewhere in the slums. Why doesn't he get a decent job, instead of writing trashy novels which nobody reads? So silly of him! So pig-headed!'" . . .

"Well, I'm rich, disgustingly rich, out of a trashy novel which I hate like hell. That's the irony of it. Rich! And I'm scared stiff at the thought of it. I shall get fat-headed and lose my soul. I'm ruined for ever as an artist. They'll want me to write another shocker. I shall have to dress like a tailor's dummy, and go to receptions, and get lionised, and sign my autograph in ladies' albums, and see my ugly mug in the picture papers . . . No, I'm damned if I do!"

There was a tap at the door, and Jasper flushed nervously—a rotten habit talking to oneself—and called "Come in!"

It was a girl who came in, rather breathlessly. She had a pretty, pale face with big eyes and looked as though she had been crying. She was in her out-door clothes, neat but rather shabby, and she began pulling off her gloves in a petulant



"What's happened?" he asked anxiously. "They haven't given you the sack, have they?"

way as she sat down in Jasper's old armchair. Jasper smiled at her with a look of comradeship.

"What's the matter, Peggy?"

"Everything!" said the girl. "What a life! What beasts men are! What devils!"

She tugged at her hat—a little thing of black straw with a red rose at the brim—and let it drop on the floor by her side, and pushed her fair fluffy hair off her forehead as though her head ached. Then she burst into tears and put her face in her hands.

Paul Jasper was distressed, and because of his incurable shyness he was horribly embarrassed. And he had a great affection for Peggy Sheldon who lived in a bed sitting-room on the floor above. He admired her courage, her gaiety, her frankness of speech, her plucky fight with poverty. He was grateful to her too. In spite of long hours in a city office, she found time to mend his socks, and sew on his buttons—made a joke of it as she did of most things. They often dined together at a cheap little restaurant in the King's Road, Chelsea, and her shrewd comments on life amused him.

"I say!" he pleaded feebly, "Peggy, my dear! It isn't like you to give way like that."

She gave a little howl into her handkerchief, and dabbed her eyes, and then attempted to laugh through her sobs.

"Sorry, Paul. I can't help it just for once. My pluck's gone. I'm down and out this time."

"What's happened?" he asked anxiously. "They haven't given you the sack, have they?"

He knew that it would be serious if she lost her job in that city

office—the Amalgamated Society of Metal Importers, Fenchurch Street—where she earned three pounds a week as typist secretary. Out of that she not only kept herself in the bed sitting-room upstairs, but sent a pound a week to a shell-shocked brother with a wife and family.

"I've given myself the sack," said Peggy. "I'll never go to that office again. I'd rather starve to death."

Jasper raised his eyebrows and stroked his long chin with a look of perplexity.

"I thought they were so kind to you? That chief of yours—he seemed such a decent sort from what you told me."

Peggy Sheldon's face flushed vividly.

"I thought him decent. I thought his kindness was—just kindness. But it wasn't. It was vileness. He began hinting things, touching me, trying to kiss my hands. I put up with it for some time, because of my salary . . . This evening he asked me to go away with him. There was a horrible scene. I had to hit him with the office ruler."

She made a sound that was half a sob and half a laugh.

"Scoundrel!" said Jasper. "Damned scoundrel!"

He clenched his hands as though he would like to strangle that manager of a city office.

"So bang goes three pounds a week!" remarked Peggy. "If I don't get another job I don't know what will happen to poor old Dick."

Dick was her shell-shocked brother, as Jasper knew. At the thought of him her eyes filled with tears again.

Jasper was silent for a time. He sat on the edge of his bed looking moodily at Peggy Sheldon, thinking what a shame it was that girls like that should have to submit to such indignities for bread and butter's sake. It was damnable. It made his blood boil with rage.

"Look here," he said, "you needn't worry about that other job. You'll get one all right—with your experience. Meanwhile I'm going to lend you some money—just to tide things over."

Peggy Sheldon was not the girl to accept his offer.

"Good Heavens, no! You're just as poverty-stricken as I am, Paul. I'm not going to sponge on you, of all men."

"I've had a bit of luck," he said nervously. "One of my books has made a big hit."

He could see that she didn't believe him. He knew by her smile that she remembered the ghastly failure of the last novel he had published under his own name. It had failed to earn any royalties. It had died the death.

"If you could turn your heart into gold—" she said mockingly.

"I'm rich," he said. "Extravagantly rich. I'm just wallowing in wealth."

She thought this a very good joke and rewarded it with satirical laughter.

He would have proved the truth of it, or tried to, but the story of his miracle was interrupted by another visitor. It was Vicary Brent, a film actor, when he happened to get a job. He was a young man who walked stiffly with his right leg because of a German machine-gun bullet. Jasper had known the time when he walked the streets of London with despair in his heart because he could not find any kind of work available for a flying man who had taken off his wings.

Tonight he stumped into Jasper's room cheerily.

"Hullo, old bird! I've just drawn my first week's pay for 'The Secret of a Woman's Soul.' Six quidlets of the very best! So now I can settle that debt of mine, with any amount of thanks."

From his waistcoat pocket he pulled out a little wad of one pound notes and made them crinkle between his fingers as though the sound held all the music of life.

It was only then that he saw Peggy Sheldon sitting in the old armchair and his face flushed because he had given away the secret of his loan from Jasper.

"Don't mind me, Mr. Brent," said Peggy. "I like to hear the rustle of that money."

"Yes, a merry sound i' faith!" said the film actor with an attempt at jauntiness. Then he recovered his composure and laughed good-humoredly.

"I'm feeling as rich as Croesus. As a matter of fact I'm feeling so elaborately well-to-do that I've bought a few little things for distribution among kind friends—in expectation of favors to come."

He fumbled in his pockets and pulled out a packet of tobacco and laid it down on Jasper's ink-stained table-cloth with two of his pound notes underneath—the payment of his loan.

"Your special brand, old pal! Smoke it when you're thinking out a new plot."

Jasper looked at the packet and the pound notes with a queer uneasy smile.

"It's devilish kind of you. But I wish you wouldn't pay back that money. I'm not in need of it. Hang on to it for a bit."

"Better take it now!" laughed young Brent. "I can't keep money without spending it. Look here, this is for you, Miss Sheldon. In token of my high esteem."

He held out a little black pig made of Irish bog oak.

"A lucky charm," he said. "Infallible!"

Peggy Sheldon thought it adorable.

Vicary Brent produced another little parcel from his jacket pocket.

"This is the most important thing. Our combined gift to poor old Bessie Belmont. Our birthday offering. I shall have to touch my fellow lodgers for five bob apiece. No hurry, of course!"

"What's all that?" asked Jasper. "It's the first I've heard of it."

Peggy Sheldon gave a laughing glance at young Brent and then at Jasper.

"It's a lodging house secret. And we didn't want to sponge on you, Paul. Those five shillings mount up, and you've done quite enough in standing us that dinner the other night."

She saw that he looked annoyed and distressed, and she put a hand on his shoulder with a caressing touch.

"I won't be left out," he grumbled. "Do you think I can't afford five shillings for poor old Bessie's birthday? Good Heavens!"

He gave a queer explosive laugh thinking of "The Curse of Poverty," and all the money it was making. They wanted to spare his five shillings!

Young Brent undid a piece of tissue paper and produced a little heart of thin gold.

"Symbolical, eh?" he remarked, regarding the trinket in the palm of his hand. "A token of affection to the greatest comedienne on the music-hall stage. Twenty years ago. Before our time, but according to the chronicles."

"Poor old dear!" said Peggy. "It will make her as happy as a child. She likes to think she's still remembered."

"I'm getting Mrs. Meggs and the Colonel to join us in the deputation," explained young Brent. "They're waiting for us now. It's going to be a rare joke."

He opened Jasper's door and called over the kitchen stairs to the landlady.

"Mrs. Meggs . . . Are you ready? . . . Bring Mollie with you. The more the merrier!"

Mrs. Meggs came upstairs, wiping some flour off her hands with a damp cloth. She was unlike the typical London landlady, being a rosy-faced little woman with a gift of laughter, and so easy-going that she treated her lodgers like adopted children and could not bear to worry them when they were behindhand with their rent. As a girl she had been in the Gaiety chorus, and it had given her a fellow feeling with actors, authors, and out-of-works. Mrs. Meggs's daughter, Mollie, came into the room with her mother. She was a pretty slip of a girl, desperately in love, as Jasper knew, with Vicary Brent, who sometimes took her to the pictures or for a ride on the top of a country omnibus.

"Where's the Colonel?" asked Brent.

"Here!" said a voice at the top of the staircase.

It was Colonel Richard Compton, late of the Indian cavalry—twenty years late—and now behindhand with his rent to Mrs. Meggs who could not bear to turn him out because of his noble manners, his white mustache, and his reminiscences of King Edward when Prince of Wales. She thrilled when this old lodger spoke of his great days as a friend of royalty.

"Compton," said the Prince, "that's a damn fine woman over there! She seems to be giving you the 'come hither', you rascal!"

Or . . . "Compton," said the Prince, "if you want to make a bit today, put your shirt on Merry Widow."

Standing on the top of the staircase, the Colonel looked a distinguished figure as usual, and quite sober, which was unusual. He gave a gracious greeting to the little company on the stairs, these "Companions of the Most Honorable Order of Poverty," as he called them in his facetious moments.

"This is a great occasion," he said in his courtly voice. "I'm delighted to join in this presentation to a very dear lady for whom I have a high regard."

Then he tapped at a door at the end of the landing and a rich voice called "Come in!"

"Pull yourself together," he said.

Inside the room, so small that a bed and table took up most of



The girl held out her hand with a gesture of appeal. "I've tried to be loyal to you. My people wanted me to break with you ages ago."

it, sat a remarkable lady in a wheeled chair. She had bright yellow hair and a full round face with bright blue eyes and the pink and white complexion of a new born babe. In her flowered kimono she overflowed the wheeled chair in curves and billows. It was twenty years since Bessie Belmont had sung her naughty little songs at the old Pavilion and played Principal Boy in Drury Lane pantomimes. Now for five years she had lived in this little room, stricken with dropsy, with only a glimpse through the window curtains of the world in which she had been the Queen of Mirth. In the gilded mirror over her mantelshelf were stuck photographs

of ballet dancers and comic actors, inscribed to "dearest Bessie," and one to "Bessie Belmont, most winsome of witches, from her devoted Dan Leno."

Enormous, over-painted, helpless in her chair, she was no longer "winsome," but her voice still had the rich chuckle which had delighted the gallery boys.

"What in the world's all this?" she asked. "Come in, anyhow. There's heaps of room if you'll sit on the blooming old bed! Colonel, you're looking vastly important this evening! What's on your chest, old dear?"

Colonel Compton, late of the Indian cavalry, cleared his throat and made a little speech.

"Miss Belmont, your fellow lodgers have asked me to convey their birthday wishes to a lady whose fame and beauty remain as a precious memory in their hearts and as an immortal tradition in English history."

"Hear, hear!" cheered young Brent. "Well spoken, sir!"

He winked at Mollie who stuffed a handkerchief to her lips.

"Perhaps," continued the Colonel, "there are not many of this younger generation who, like myself, have had the privilege of seeing you in the time of your success, who remember the storms of applause that swept up to your feet above the footlights, who are still haunted by the magic of your songs, by the laughter in your eyes, by the exquisite grace of your dancing, by the spirit of mirth that put a spell upon the millions who adored you."

"Bravo!" cried Mrs. Meggs with shrill enthusiasm.

The old Colonel hesitated, forgot the speech he had learned by heart, stammered a little, and then dropped abruptly from the heights of oratory.

"Bessie, old girl, as a young spark I used to worship the ground you trod on. Those wicked little songs of yours, eh? We all used to whistle 'em. My boys went singing 'em, on the way to fight the Afghans . . .

Alas and alack!

Jane came back,

With a naughty little twinkle in her eye! . . ."

The Colonel gave out the old chorus in a quavery voice which was broken by a cough.

"Well, my dear," he said, "we've come to wish you a happy birthday, and many of them. And we want to show our love by a small gift in which we've all had a share, or will have when we've paid up. Nothing very much—this is Poverty Hall, you know—but just a little token of affection and esteem. Not the gift but the givers! What, what? . . . Mr. Brent, produce the trinket, if you please."

In the best style of film romance young Brent made a low and sweeping bow, dropped stiffly on one knee—his wounded knee—and presented the heart of thin gold.

Bessie Belmont's baby complexion was suffused with a purple tint, and her blue eyes filled with tears as she realized what the gift represented.

"You dears!" she said. "All as poor as church mice, but mighty generous to a fat old ruin . . . Why, damn it, I want to cry my eyes out, just because you've made me so happy."

Jasper slipped away from the company in Bessie Belmont's room. Among these people of "Poverty Hall," as the Colonel had called it, he felt a fraud with all that money waiting for him. He had the guilty conscience of a profiteer or *nouveau riche* hiding his wealth from people who believed him to be as poverty-stricken as themselves. Well, he would share his luck with them . . .

He left the lodging house in Royal Avenue and walked to South Kensington. His first duty, after all, was to the girl who had waited for him so long, so loyally. Lately she had lost heart a little. He had been so long in making good. She had waited nearly three years for him, resisting the pressure of her well-to-do relatives to break her engagement with a man who could not provide her with a decent home. Now, at last, he could bring her



Peggy Sheldon thought it too beautiful for words, but she was

good tidings. The amazing success of his worst novel had altered all things. He could say to her, "My dear, we needn't wait any longer. Let's be quick and make that home of ours. I'm rich!"

Jasper was emotional at that thought. Indeed the shock of success had emotionalized his whole nature, usually so quiet and calm. He was a little dazed by it, like a man under the spell of some enchantment. He was in his shabbiest clothes, having forgotten to change into a more respectable suit for this visit to his fiancée in her people's big house in Ennismore Gardens. Also he was not conscious of the time, and when he strode up the steps and rang the bell he was aware of the grave displeasure of the butler who opened the door.

"The family is at dinner, sir. They are entertaining guests."

"That's all right, Hodgson. Tell Miss Marsh that I have something particular to say."

The butler bowed slightly and made way for Jasper to pass



nervous because of that author who wanted a typist secretary and someone to play tennis with him.

into the hall. He took the visitor's hat and stick—an old felt hat much the worse for wear—as though he hated to soil his hands with them.

"The family will have finished dinner in about half an hour," he remarked with grave condescension.

Jasper waited that half hour in the billiard room. He could hear the voices of "the family" in the next room. They were laughing and talking. He could picture them there: his future father-in-law, bald-headed, slightly flushed with good wine, garrulous about the Income Tax and the iniquities of the Labor Government; Edna's brother Herbert, elegantly dressed, supercilious, cynical; the two younger brothers just down from Oxford, good-looking, fresh, with the arrogance of youth, intolerant of men like Jasper who looked as though they slept in their clothes; Edna's mother, stately, wearing jewels in her hair, keeping a sharp eye on the servants, inattentive to the conversation. And the guests . . . prosperous, fashionable, fond of golf, owners of

expensive motorcars. Not Jasper's crowd. He felt ill at ease with them. There was no intellectual bridge between his world and theirs.

It was more than half an hour before Edna came into the billiard room. She looked beautiful in her evening gown of green silk, showing her arms and neck. For a moment she stood in the doorway looking at him with a faint smile on her lips. She seemed pale, he thought, and worried.

"I've come to tell you something. Something—tremendous," said Jasper. "You'll hardly believe it, my dear. I can hardly believe it myself . . . We can be married as soon as you like! Next week. The quicker the better. I've had a wonderful stroke of luck."

He noticed that a wave of color swept under her pale skin. She did not look interested in his luck. She did not even ask him the meaning of it.

"Paul," she said in a low voice, "I've (Continued on page 128)

Here's A Smashing Novel Packed Into a Few Pages

By **W. Somerset Maugham**

Mr. Know-All

Photographic Illustrations by Alfred Cheney Johnston

I WAS prepared to dislike Max Valetta before I knew him. I was sailing from San Francisco to Yokohama, and the only berth I could get was in a cabin already occupied. When I was told the name of my companion my heart sank. It suggested closed port-holes and the night air rigidly excluded. It was bad enough to share a cabin with anyone, but I should have looked upon it with less dismay if his name had been Smith or Brown.

When I went on board I found Mr. Valetta's luggage already below. I did not like the look of it; there were too many labels on the suitcases, and the wardrobe trunk was too big. He had unpacked his toilet things, and I observed that he was a patron of the excellent Monsieur Coty; for I saw on the washing-stand his scent, his hair-wash and his brilliantine. Mr. Valetta's brushes, ebony with his monogram in gold, would have been all the better for a scrub. I did not like Mr. Valetta.

The ship sailed, and I made my way into the smoking-room. I called for a pack of cards and began to play solitaire. I had scarcely sat down before a man came up to me and asked me if he was right in thinking my name was so and so.

"I am Max Valetta," he added, with a smile which showed a row of flashing teeth, and sat down.

"Oh, yes, we're sharing a cabin, I think."

"Bit of luck, I call it. You never know who you're going to be put in with. I was jolly glad when I heard you were English. I'm all for us English sticking together when we're abroad, if you understand what I mean."

I blinked. "Are you English?" I asked, perhaps tactlessly.

"Rather. You don't think I look like an American, do you? British to the backbone, that's what I am."

To prove it, Mr. Valetta took out of his pocket a British passport and airily waved it under my nose.

King George has many strange subjects. Mr. Valetta was short and of a sturdy build; clean shaven and dark skinned, with a fleshy, hooked nose and very large, lustrous and liquid eyes. His long black hair was sleek and curly. He spoke with a fluency in which there was nothing English and his gestures were extravagant. I felt pretty sure that a closer inspection of that British passport would have betrayed the fact that Mr. Valetta was born under a bluer sky than is generally seen in England.

"What will you have?" he asked me.

I looked at him doubtfully. When I am not thirsty I do not know which I dislike more, a ginger-ale or a lemon-squash. But he flashed an oriental smile at me.

"Whisky and soda or a dry Martini, you have only to say the word."

From each of his hip-pockets he fished a flask and laid them on the table before me. I chose the Martini, and calling the steward he ordered a tumbler of ice and a couple of glasses.

"A very good cocktail," I said.

"Well, there are plenty more where that came from, and if you've got any friends on board, you tell them you've got a pal who's got all the liquor in the world."

Mr. Valetta was chatty. He talked of New York and of San Francisco. He discussed plays, pictures and politics. He was patriotic. The Union Jack is an impressive piece of drapery, but when it is flourished by a gentleman from Alexandria or Beirut, I cannot but feel that it loses somewhat in dignity. Mr. Valetta

was familiar. I do not wish to put on airs, but I cannot help feeling that it is seemly in a total stranger to put mister before my name when he addresses me. Mr. Valetta, doubtless to set me at my ease, used no such formality. I did not like Mr. Valetta. I had put aside the cards when he sat down, but now thinking that for this first occasion our conversation had lasted long enough, I went on with my game.

"The three on the four," said Mr. Valetta.

There is nothing more exasperating in solitaire than to be told where to put the card you have turned up before you have had a chance to look for yourself.

"It's coming out, it's coming out," he cried. "The ten on the knave."

With rage and hatred in my heart I finished. Then he seized the pack.

"Do you like card tricks?" he asked.

"No, I hate card tricks," I answered.

"Well, I'll just show you this one."

He showed me three. Then I said I would go down to the dining-room and get my seat at table.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "I've already taken a seat for you. I thought that as we were in the same cabin we might just as well sit at the same table."

I did not like Mr. Valetta.

I not only shared a cabin with him and ate three meals a day at the same table, but I could not walk round the deck without his joining me.

It was impossible to snub him. It never occurred to him that he was not wanted. He was certain that you were as glad to see him as he was to see you. In your own house you might have kicked him downstairs and slammed the door in his face without the suspicion dawning on him that he was not a welcome visitor.

He was a good mixer, and in three days he knew everyone on the ship. He ran everything. He managed the sweeps, he conducted the auctions, he collected money for prizes at the sports, he got up quoit and golf matches, he organized the concert, he arranged the fancy dress ball. He was everywhere and always. He was certainly the best hated man on the ship.

He was called by everyone Mr. Know-All, even to his face; but he did not care, he took it as a compliment; his assurance was sublime.

But it was at meal times that his dominion was intolerable. He was hearty, jovial, loquacious and argumentative. He knew everything better than anybody else, and it was an affront to his overweening vanity that you should disagree with him. No matter how small the point was he could not suffer the thought that he could possibly make a mistake. We sat at the doctor's table. Mr. Valetta would certainly have had it all his own way, for the doctor was lazy and I was indifferent, except for a man called Ramsay who sat there also. He was as dogmatic as Mr. Valetta, and therefore resented bitterly the Levantine's cocksureness. The discussions they had were acrimonious and interminable.

Ramsay was in the American Consular Service, a tall and heavy man from the Middle West, and he was stationed at Kobe. He was on his way back to resume his post, having been on a flying visit to New York to fetch his wife who had been spending a year at home. Mrs. Ramsay was a very pretty little thing,

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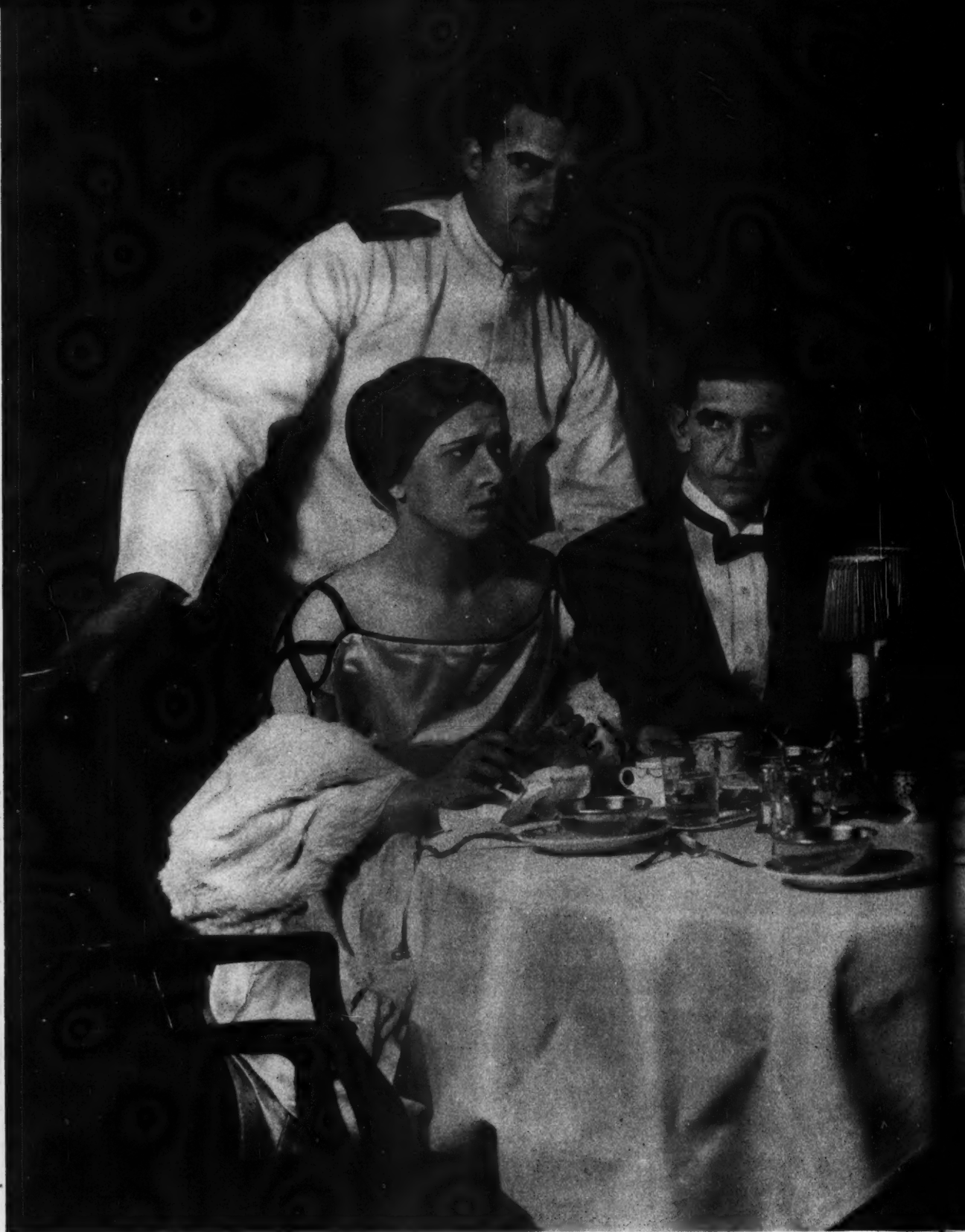
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*You could not look at her without being
struck by her modesty. It shone in her
like a flower on a coat.*



With a smile of triumph Mr. Valetta handed back the pearls. Suddenly he caught

with pleasant manners and a sense of humor; the Consular Service is ill paid, and she was dressed always very simply; but she knew how to wear her clothes and she achieved an effect of distinction. I should not have paid any particular attention to

her but that she possessed a quality which may be common enough in women, but nowadays is not obvious in their demeanor. You could not look at her without being struck by her modesty. It shone in her like a flower on a coat.



sight of Mrs. Ramsay's face. She was staring at him with wide and terrified eyes.

One evening at dinner the conversation by chance drifted to the subject of pearls. There had been in the papers a good deal of talk about the culture pearls which the cunning Japanese were making, and the doctor remarked that they must

inevitably diminish the value of real ones. They are so perfect.

Mr. Valetta, as was his habit, rushed the new topic. He told us all that was to be known about pearls.

I do not believe Ramsay knew anything about them at all,

*A letter was slipped stealthily
under the state-room door.*

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but he could not resist the opportunity to have a fling at the Levantine, and in five minutes we were in the middle of a heated argument.

I had seen Mr. Valetta vehement and voluble before, but never so voluble and vehement as now.

At last something that Ramsay said stung him, for he thumped the table and shouted:

"Well, I ought to know what I am talking about. I'm going to Japan just to look into this Japanese pearl business. I'm in the trade and there's not a man in it who won't tell you that what I say about pearls goes. I know all the best pearls in the world, and what I don't know about pearls isn't worth knowing."

Here was news for us, for Mr. Valetta, with all his loquacity, had never told anyone what his business was. We only knew vaguely that he was going to Japan on some commercial errand. He looked round the table triumphantly.

"They'll never be able to get a culture pearl that an expert like me can't tell with half an eye." He pointed to a chain that Mrs. Ramsay wore. "You take my word for it, Mrs. Ramsay, that chain you're wearing will never be worth a cent less than it is now."

Mrs. Ramsay in her modest way flushed a little and slipped the chain inside her dress. Ramsay leaned forward. He gave us all a look and a smile flickered in his eyes.

"That's a pretty chain of Mrs. Ramsay's, isn't it?"

"I noticed it at once," answered Mr. Valetta. "It's a very fine string indeed."

"I didn't buy it myself, of course. I'd be interested to know how much you think it cost."

"Oh, in the trade somewhere round fifteen thousand dollars. But if it was bought on Fifth Avenue I shouldn't be surprised to hear that anything up to thirty thousand was paid for it."

Ramsay smiled grimly.

"You'll be surprised to hear that Mrs. Ramsay bought that string at a department store, the day before we left New York, for eighteen dollars."

Mr. Valetta flushed. "Nonsense. It's not only real, but it's as fine a string for its size as I've ever seen."

"Will you bet on it? I'll bet you a hundred dollars it's imitation."

"Done."

"Oh, Elmer, you can't bet on a certainty," said Mrs. Ramsay. She had a little smile on her lips and her tone was gently deprecating.

"Can't I?" said Ramsay. "If I get a chance of easy money like that I should be all sorts of a fool not to take it."

"But how can it be proved?" she continued. "It's only my word against Mr. Valetta's."

"Let me look at the chain, and if it's imitation I'll tell you quickly enough. I can afford to lose a hundred dollars," said Mr. Valetta.

"Take it off, dear. Let the gentleman look at it as much as he wants."

Mrs. Ramsay hesitated a moment. She put her hands to the clasp.

"I can't undo it," she said. "Mr. Valetta will just have to take my word for it."

I had a sudden suspicion that something unfortunate was about to occur, but I could think of nothing to say.

Ramsay jumped up.

"I'll undo it," he said, loosening the clasp.

He handed the chain to Mr. Valetta. The Levantine took a magnifying glass from his pocket and closely examined it. A smile of triumph spread over his smooth and swarthy face. He handed back the chain. He was about to speak. Suddenly he caught sight of Mrs. Ramsay's face. It was so white that she looked as though she was about to faint. She was staring at him with wide and terrified eyes. They held a desperate appeal; it was so clear that I wondered why her husband did not see it.

Mr. Valetta stopped with his mouth open. He flushed deeply. You could almost see the effort he was making over himself.

"I was mistaken," he said. "It's a very good imitation, but of course as soon as I looked through my glass I saw that it wasn't real. I think eighteen dollars is just about as much as the damned thing's worth."

He took out his pocketbook and from it a hundred dollar bill. He handed it to Ramsay without a word.

"Perhaps that'll teach you not to be so cocksure another time, my young friend," said Ramsay as he took the note.

I noticed that Mr. Valetta's hands were trembling.

The story spread over the ship as stories do, and he had to put up with a good deal of chaff that evening. It was a fine joke that Mr. Know-All had been caught out. But Mrs. Ramsay retired to her state-room with a headache.

Next morning I got up and began to shave. Mr. Valetta lay on his bed smoking a cigaret. Suddenly there was a small scraping sound and I saw a letter pushed under the door. I opened the door and looked out. There was nobody there. I picked up the letter and saw that it was addressed to Max Valetta. The name was written in block letters. I handed it to him.

"Who's this from?" he said. He opened it. "Oh!" He took out of the envelope, not a letter, but a hundred dollar bill. He looked at me and again he reddened. He tore the envelope into little bits and gave them to me.

"Do you mind just throwing them out of the port-hole?"

I did as he asked, and then I looked at him with a smile.

"No one likes being made to look a perfect damned fool," he said.

"Were the pearls real?" I asked.

"If I had a pretty little wife I shouldn't let her spend a year in New York while I stayed in Kobe," said he.

At that moment I did not entirely dislike Mr. Valetta. He reached out for his pocketbook and carefully put in it the hundred dollar note.



Peter B. Kyne during the World War.

Peter Kyne is one of my oldest and one of my best friends; one of the friends I miss terribly when I don't see him for a long time.

I haven't seen Peter for more than six months. He's been on a trip around the world. As I write this I am in Paris waiting for him and waiting as impatiently as if we'd been separated for years.

I want to hear Peter tell all the impressions he's gathered on his trip. I want to go about France with him and hear his impressions of France. It will be the first time he has been here since he came as a captain of artillery during the World War. Just as his recent visit to the Philippines was his first time there since he campaigned among the rice paddies when he helped to chase Aguinaldo and his little brown men.

They'll all be impressions worth hearing. Worth hearing even if told by an ordinary teller, but wonderfully worth hearing as Peter Kyne will tell them. For he sees all of life through eyes of romance.

He saw even the training camps during the war through those eyes, and because he did he has written a story of his own training camp that will touch your heart strings. It's called "The Bluebird" and it's coming in next month's *Cosmopolitan*.

[R. L.]

By H. C. Witwer

LOVE



"Hey, don't take the air! I already ordered your dessert," the thrifty Pete cries.

Jersey City, April 10—Ben Warren, former Hale football star, lost a close six-round decision here tonight to Young Farrell. It was Warren's first professional bout. The men are heavyweights.

SPEAKING of mushrooms, that's just an old newspaper clipping that burns me up every time I come across it in my scrap-book—and, really, if that kind of a clipping doesn't belong in a scrap book, then a cake of soap's miscast in a bathroom.

But let's hasten back to the above cold-blooded and unlengthy dispatch from the front. Leaping Tuna! A paltry thirty words to describe one of the most pungent quarrels since Cain took a decision over his unfortunate relative, Abel. Three or four lines to retail a bout between a modern Galahad and a human gorilla. A contest that fairly reeked with what the highbrows would call "psychology" and I'm going to take the liberty of calling it that, too. And the idea of dismissing my handsome Ben with a mere, "The men are heavyweights." I love that! To return to Cain and Abel, quite a trip, I suppose the newspapers described their fracas something like this:

Cain ruined Abel here today in a one-round bout. It was Cain's first fight and Abel's last. The men were irritated.

Ben Warren lost his first attempt at assault and battery for pennies because he lacked what Jimmy Clinch, his manager, calls "the killer instinct." As a boxer, Ben knew his oil, but as an assassin à la Dempsey Ben was a one-tube set, if you know what I mean. Really, he was what you might call a synthetic fighter, made for the ring but not born for it!

Well, I understand from my private investigators that a successful pugilist must have been created a prizefighter—must have wiled away his time as a tot with a punching bag instead of a rattle and been brought up on resin dust instead of milk. He must feel that day wasted that he doesn't break a nose or have his own knocked out of true and the sock of glove against the skin he loves to touch must be sweet music to his cauliflower ears. He must be merciless against a battered opponent and thrill at the sight of gore. To repeat, to get anywhere in the squared circle he must first and last be a killer!

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Well, I want to say to you this afternoon, that wasn't Ben Warren. A sportsman and a gentleman, mere dollars couldn't arouse the necessary rage in Ben against a helpless adversary. He wouldn't give 'em the last lesson first. Despite the frenzied shrieks of the blood-thirsty lovers of the manly art, Ben would step back and allow his amazed *vis-à-vis* to get his breath instead of knocking him out.

Don't think for thirty seconds that Ben was a cake eater—once aroused, Ben could maul with the best of them, but, honestly, it took more than doubloons to cause my athalete to want the other

boy's heart. He needed a far stronger incentive to make him run amuck and as I was partly responsible for him entering the ring, I hauled off and furnished the necessary incentive. Tune in to my wave length, all you distance fiends, I'm coming on the air now heavy!

I suppose you think that a girl who knows so much about prizefighters must be as loose as cinders. Well, get new with me once and you'll figure different! I'm nobody's fool and if you think I am you're demented. In my portfolio as switchboard operator at the St. Moe Hotel, Broadway, I meet all kinds of dizzy males, fresh every hour, which is just what they are. I might be kidding with a full-blooded judge when a movie star will back in on the dialogue, or maybe a banker will be running a temperature at my switchboard when a cigar salesman will try his luck, get me? I know things about a lot of names in "Who's Who" that would make your hair curl, and, really, I've had just as many laughs when strutting my stuff with boys who have as much chance to attract world-wide comment as a thermometer in a sanitarium. All my affairs have been harmless enough—though that statement gets a laugh from Hazel Killian of the movies, my beautiful, overboiled girl friend. My name? Gladys Murgatroyd—I thought you knew me!

I didn't actually sell Ben Warren the idea of becoming a prizefighter—I merely told him to cease driving aimlessly around in his big Bolls-Joyce, leave Hale University flat on its back and make his mark in the world, or else stop trying to ply me with matrimony. Don't get excited! The Bolls-Joyce belonged to Ben's boss. By a strange coincidence, Benjamin personally didn't have enough lucre to buy breakfast for a gnat on a diet. He was working his weary way through Hale by chauffeur and that's what steamed me up. Me and Ben had done time in school together at my home town, Bountiful, Utah—laugh that one off!

I accidentally ran across him on the road to Gotham after the curtain had fell to denote the lapse of about seven years and Ben began trying to build me up from where he left off when I last presented him with the chaste salute of a fifteen-year-old at the

Illustrations

by

J. W. McGurk

at First Fight

old back porch. As he stood now he was big, healthy, handsome and—meaningless! Still, honestly, I couldn't seem to cancel him as I had canceled a flock of similar red-blooded he-men, full of ambition when in my company, but not the kind of ambition that would lead them or me to fame and fortune. I don't crave any champions of me—what I want is a champion of the world!

Me and Hazel are stalking the ostermoor when for no good reason Hazel makes the following bald statement:

"This heavy boy friend of yours—Ben Warren—I met him bounding around on the boulevards today." "You're always bragging," I says, reaching for the cold cream. "Go on with your story."

"He shaped up something fearful!" continues Hazel, ever a booster. "He certainly ought to put some military brushes through a drill on his hair. I'm satisfied he hasn't had it cut for a month!"

"I love that!" I says, a bit burned. "What do you care? Lots of people are opposed to bobbing."

"Oh, what he does is no problem to me," says Hazel. "Only, I'd hate to step out with a John which won't give the barbers a tumble. Honest to Coolidge, Gladys, his tresses was down to his shoulders. I told him he better get either a haircut or a violin!"

"You make any more wise cracks like that to my playmate and you and me are all washed up!" I came back, angrily. "Maybe the poor kid hasn't got the price of a haircut!"

"You don't mean maybe, you mean *positively*!" says Hazel, thoroughly enjoying herself. "Do you know, I've heard so much about the *girls* in the original Floradora sextette, that I often wonder what ever become of the *men* which was in it. There's a thought for today!"

"What's all that got to do with Ben Warren?" I snapped, still peeved.

"Oh, I just thought maybe he was one of the boys which warbled 'Tell Me, Pretty Maiden,'" draws Hazel. "He sure looked it when I caught him this morning!"

Then the fun began!

One hour later we were both hoarse and the neighbors were even hoarser, but the subject of Mr. Benjamin Warren had been gone into from every angle with painstaking care. We finally quit broadcasting, turned out the lights and went to sleep as friendly as a ferret and a mouse. It was a good draw.

The following day at the time for noon rice, as the Chinese says, I was just going out to lunch when I ran into my self-appointed bodyguards, Jerry Murphy and Pete Kift. The man-mountain Jerry's our house detective and Pete's the bell captain. Really, I need 'em both the same way I need another neck, but their whole-hearted devotion to me is very touching. They generally touch me a few times a week before pay day, but on this occasion they'd just drawn their hush money from the hotel and had broken out with a severe attack of generosity. The moment they saw me they propositioned.

"You're just in time, Cutey!" booms Jerry. "I'm throwin' a lunch to celebrate nothin'. C'mon along and I'll wheat cake you!"

"I'll pay for the dessert, if you people don't get too wild over the French pastry," puts in Pete, grabbing my arm. "C'mon, kid, eventually why not now?"

"You wouldn't fool me, would you?" I says. "I never heard of you boys putting anything out before. What's the huge idea?"

"We want to tip you about—eh—about somethin'," says Jerry, with a mysterious glance at Pete. "Me and Pete's been



"It's not a habit of mine to play around with losers, Ben," I says warmly. "If you don't show some speed I'm going to check you out."

talkin' matters over and we feel you're badly in need of some brotherly advice. Where's a better place since the Volstead plague for a conference than over a platter of steamin' corned beef hash?"

"Where's a better place? Any place!" I says. "But you have unloosed my curiosity and I'll go with you. Regardless of the food I'm positive I'll do two things—get some laughs and save a dollar!"

"'At's all a king could ask!" says Jerry. Let's shove off—alley oop!"

Well, really, I knew I was crazy to do this, as the fellow remarked while diving from the top of Pike's Peak, but I tripped along with 'em. I like to eat in restaurants but not the marble-top table ones, still it was to one of those traps that these two philanthropists took me. Jerry's a radio nut and so was the exceedingly unhandsome waitress, who greeted him familiarly with a come-hither look in her eyes and showed him all her teeth. As we sat down, Pete nudged me.

"For cryin' out loud!" he whispers hoarsely. "Look at this snapper's pan! She seems like a nightmare to me. What a pair she and Jerry'd make for a comic strip, what I mean!"

I killed the laugh with a napkin over my mouth and listened for five minutes to wave lengths, antenna, high frequency, meters, tuning in, fading out, loops, arials, loud speakers, amplifiers, crystals, or what have you? Peter studied the menu and kept my sides aching with grunted comments on Jerry and his girl friend.

"Last night I got Denver and Chicago on my set!" announces the waitress.

"'At's a victory!" declares Jerry, admiringly.

"I'm goin' to try for Los Angeles, tonight," says the waitress.

"Be yourself!" butts in Pete, sarcastically. "You better throw that needle away, kid—that stuff will get you in time! Catch me a glass of water."

"What's wrong with the girl's statement?" says Jerry, bristling up. "I often pick up Denver and Chicago myself. I only got three tubes, but the stations I get dumfounds even me! I dally with Cleveland, Des Moines, Washington, Philadelphia and them joints all the time. One night I caught the tail of an announcement from no less than Idiotic, Nebraska. But the longest distance I ever got come this morning!"

"Who did you get?" asks the waitress, eagerly.

"Well," says Jerry, "I was monkeyin' around the big, seven-tube neutrodyne we got at the St. Moe and I'd just turned on the loud speaker when the manager caught me and I got Hades!"

"That's distance!" says Pete. "Let's cut this thomasfoolery and get some service. I come here to get chow, not hysterical!"

"Order me a couple of hard-boiled eggs. I'll be back in a minute," says Jerry, rising.

"When you get them two they'll be three eggs at the table," remarks Pete. "Where are you due?"

Jerry pulls a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste from his coat pocket.

"I never eat no meals without cleanin' my teeth!" he says, proudly.

"See if I care!" says Pete. "Anyways, you don't have to escort them fangs of yours—just send out the bridges with that biscuit-shooter you favor!"

"Lay off 'at little waitress!" growls Jerry. "I like her. She understands me!"

"She must be good at puzzles then," laughs Pete. "Did you ever notice how much she looks like a mock-turtle?"

"Are you tryin' to choose me?" Jerry snarls. "Don't get giddy, or I'll chalk up a decision over you right here and now!"

"Jake with me!" says Pete promptly, pushing back his chair.

"Hold everything!" I butt in. "No hats broken while there's a lady present, boys!"

Still growling, Jerry lumbered off towards the washroom, toothbrush in hand, while I turned to Pete.

"Ain't that big ape a panic?" inquires Peter.

"I think it's splendid that Jerry takes such good care of his teeth!" I says. "After all, you know, be they ever so painful there's no teeth like your own. I never knew Jerry was so hygienic."

"Applesauce!" sniffs Pete. "That mug ain't hy-nothin'. The only reason he cleans them teeth of his at any time is out of nervousness!"

Pete signed off when Jerry returned and attacked his eggs. The first one he unshelled drove him to cover with a howl for the waitress.

"How come?" asks Pete. "Is that egg bad?"

"Bad?" snorts Jerry. "It's what you call incorrigible! What's 'at poultice you're eatin'?"

"Chicken legs," says Pete, "and I must say I seen better!"

"Where?" growls Jerry, who favored this café.

"In the Follies!" grins Pete.

"'At's a payoff!" Jerry chortles. "Order a extry cup of coffee for yourself—a dime a laugh's cheap enough these days!"

While the waitress exchanged Jerry's eggs I toyed with my chicken à la King—a mockery in this beanery, honestly!

"Before proceeding further with this act, I'd like to hear that brotherly advice you boys were going to stake me to," I says.

Jerry and Pete exchanged uneasy glances. Then Jerry spoke up like a man.

"It's—it's about 'at college Jasper which is promotin' you, Cutey," he says. "We—eh—well, we're certain he's a total loss and you're just fritterin' away your valuable time on him!"

"No kiddin'!" adds Pete. "He ain't got no regular racket, what I mean. He's neither a bricklayer or a banker! Just a proper Patsy which gets his cakes by drivin' somebody's car, whilst he's studyin' Mah Jong or the like at college. Not so good!"

Mute with indignation, but not so mute that I couldn't talk, I laid down my knife and fork.

"Why, you couple of clowns!" I exploded. "What do you mean by delving into my personal affairs?"

"Don't get sore, kid!" says Pete, hurriedly. "We're only lookin' after your best interests. Just make out we're a couple of big brothers—we know full well we ain't got a Chinaman's chance to be nothin' else to you!"

"'At's the idea, Cutey," nods Jerry. "The whole thing amounts to this—at gil from Hale's got only one idea in mind

as far as you're concerned and what that idea is you'll have to guess at. I'd tell you myself, only I ain't your mother. Them college guys always looks for the best of it in a case of this kind!"

"Absolutely!" says Pete. "That baby's givin' you a run around. I think it would be nobby to deport him!"

Fit to be chained, I pushed back my chair and arose.

"Honestly, if it wasn't that I knew you were both half-witted I'd be off you for life!" I says, haughtily. "As it is, you can finish your lunch without me. A good place for you master minds to stay away from for awhile will be my switchboard!"

"'At's what a guy gets for tryin' to protect the weak!" rumbles Jerry, reproachfully.

"Hey—don't take the air; I already ordered your dessert!" the thrifty Pete cries in alarm.

But I left them flat. As I passed through the door of this five and ten café, I saw Pete and Jerry struggling to take my uneaten chocolate éclair away from each other. Just a pair of nice boys.

Well, here were Hazel, Jerry and Pete—three of my best friends—who couldn't see Ben Warren with a field glass. Not that their raps made me any less keen for my sweetie, but it did make me thoughtful, really! In fact, I put in a very sleepless night talking Benjamin over with myself and when he showed up at the switchboard the next morning I was all set for him. He had evidently decided to get the haircut instead of the violin the catty Hazel suggested, and, personally, I thought he looked rather smart.

"Hello, Beautiful!" he greets me, with his hypnotic smile.

"How are all the little numbers this morning?"

"Busy!" I says. "Where have you been hiding out?"

"I wouldn't fool you," he says, jauntily, "I've been in the country listening to the weeping willows sob. Drove my boss down from White Plains this morning in forty-five minutes!"

"Well, what does that do—make you an Elk?" I carelessly turned. "What else do you know?"

"Nothing much—except that I'm afraid I flunked my Spanish," he says, with sudden gloom.

"Cheer up!" I tell him. "Really, I've seen things go along like that for days and then get worse! Listen, Ben—how long are you going to be just a chauffeur? Isn't there anything else you can do that's got that cheated?"

Ben looks a bit hurt. The big kid!

"Why, there doesn't seem to be anything else I can do right now, Gladys," he says slowly. "And I don't think being a chauffeur is so bad. I've got to work at something to earn my way through college, you know, dear."

Then I began to bear down on him.

"Ben," I says, seriously, "what right have you got to go through college if you can't afford it? You're no pampered rich man's son—you've got to make your own way. Well, why waste the best years of your life trying to be appointed to the Hale football team or playing first bass on the glee club? While you're frittering away your time at New Haven you might be finding yourself—making good at something—picking out your life work!"

Honestly, he looked at me as if I'd slapped his handsome face!

"But—but, Gladys, I'm not equipped to tackle the world yet!" he stammers. "I must complete my education. I—"

"What do you mean you're not equipped?" I cut him off, sharply. "You're young and healthy and you've had a high school education. If you haven't got the only other equipment necessary, to wit, *ambition*, you'd be a flop—college or no college. Besides, Ingersoll says that college is a place where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed!"

"But Gascoigne says, 'A man is better unborn than untaught!'" smiles Ben.

"Blaah!" I answered him, "I prefer Ingersoll. I never heard of your friend Gascoigne making any watches!"

Really, that seemed to goad him for a minute and I returned to the attack before he could think of a comeback.

"Many—if not the bulk—of the world's most successful men never saw the inside of a university!" I says. "There must be lots of big opportunities for a boy like you that don't call for a college diploma!"

"I don't care for the movies," grins Ben, "and I have no desire to become a bootlegger!"

"If you think I'm kidding, you're foolish indeed, Ben!" I says warmly. "It's not a habit of mine to play around with losers and if you don't show me some speed I'm going to check you out. You forget about Hale, do your stuff and make it snappy or I simply can't be annoyed with you any longer. And, Ben, listen



Just one blow and Farrell dropped to the pavement.

—once we break, honestly, I wouldn't take you back if you cried your eyes out!"

Well, he was simply thunderstruck.

"I—just what profession or trade do you *want* me to take up, Gladys?" he asks me, wild-eyed.

"I don't care *what* you do as long as it's worth while and you make good at it," I says. "If you take my advice, you'll suit yourself!"

For a minute, Ben just stared at me. I was busy plugging the board, but I could feel his gaze burning through the back of my neck, really! Then without a word he turned and strode out of the lobby, shoving indignant guests aside with his broad shoulders and leaving the revolving doors spinning around in his wake like an airplane propeller. It was what I've decided to call a fortnight before his manly figure obstructed my vision again.

Well, I was pretty low during those two Ben-less weeks, don't



"Don't make any wisecracks like that to my playmate!" I answers.

think I wasn't! I was afraid I'd been just a bit too hard-boiled with this boy and had lost him forever and a day. Ben was a good egg and I was really fond of him. Many a good weep was a feature of my lonely evenings at home till one afternoon Benjamin breezed into the St. Moe and eased up to the switchboard, whistling blithely—you've heard that tune, I'm sure. He greeted the scowling Jerry and the sneering Pete cordially and then turned his attention to me. The very first thing I noticed after I'd broke down and smiled at him was that under one of his eyes reposed a large, discolored lump.

"Good Heavens! What's the matter with your right eye?" I gasped.

"That's all right—I have another one!" he grins, cheerfully. "That swelling is known as a 'mouse' in—ah—in sporting circles. I received it in training."

"Still the football hero of dear old Hale, eh?" I says, scornfully. "I thought I told you that—"

"I've left college, Gladys!" he quietly interrupts.

Broiling canine!

"Oh, Ben, I'm—I'm sorry!" I gasped, all at sea. "Honestly, I didn't mean to—I just wanted to shake you up a little—that was all I intended when we had that argument a couple of weeks ago!"

Bennie laughs.

"You shook me up, I assure you!" he says. "And you were right, Gladys. I was philandering my life away. Well, it's different now! Acting upon your excellent advice, I've entered—ah—I've entered a profession that will give me fame and fortune if I make good at it. And I'm going to make

good, Gladys, or die trying!"

"Hurrah!" I says, enthusiastically, thrilled to my toes. "What is this pro-

fession, Ben?"

"Boxing!" he says promptly, swelling up like a mump.

Honestly, for a second I thought I was going to find out what a swoon was! I take him out of college to make him a big man and he turns prizefighter.

I guess to Ben my face must have been an open book with large print. He raised a soothing hand.

"Give me a shot at this game, dear!" he says. "I'm not exactly a novice at it. While of course I've never fought professionally, I've boxed a lot at college and I like it. Jimmy Clinch, my manager, swears I'll be at the top of the heap in a couple of years—a champion. Then I can click off perhaps half a million a bout—think of it, *half a million!* Why, even now it's a short cut to wealth. I'm asking five hundred dollars for my first contest, or I don't turn a wheel!"

"But, oh, Ben—they say Jack Dempsey's such a tiger in the ring. Really, you might be killed or something!" I bust out.

Ben threw back his head and laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Don't worry, Gladys!" he says, "I'm not going to begin at the top and work my way down! It will be

a good two years before I enter a ring with Dempsey, if he's champion then. My first bout is with Young Farrell at Jersey City, just ten days from today. I don't think he'll give me much trouble—he's just a third-rater, sort of a trial horse for me. All of which reminds me that I'm due at the gym. I've been soaking my hands in a bucket of brine all morning to toughen them and this afternoon I have a stiff workout ahead of me. How about dining with me tonight?"

"You've made a date!" I sigh. "But, really—"

"I'm off!" says Ben. "Jimmy Clinch will have bloodhounds on my trail if I'm ten seconds late. I'll call for you about six-thirty and we'll talk it all over at dinner. Bring a good appetite and a liberal mind!"

Well, at first I was plenty angry at Ben, thinking this boxing thing all out of order. I was also sore at myself for chasing him away from school—it really looked as if I'd gummed matters up properly, in spite of my perfect intentions. But, honestly, the more I thought over it the more my irritation made room for a feeling of pleasure. After all, I pondered, Ben *might* become a champion and while I'm not particularly a fight fan, I do like men who are men in the great open spaces or anywhere else! While my mind is full of this, Pete Kift leaned over the board.

"Did you peg the bum eye on that football sensation of yours?" he asks me with a grin. "He must of spoke out of turn somewhere, hey?"

"He doesn't play football any more, Insidip," I says coldly.

"He's a boxer!"

"Don't make me laugh!" sneers Pete. "If that tomato can fight, I can show you a Ku Klux Kleagle named Goldstein!"

"Go over to Jersey City on the tenth and convince yourself you're wrong again!" I retort. "Ben is going to box—let's see—oh, yes!—he's going to box Young Farrell over there!"

Pete frowns thoughtfully and then jerks his head for Jerry Murphy to come over from his stance at the desk.

"Jerry," says Pete, "did you ever hear of a box fighter named Young Farrell?"

"Absolutely!" says Jerry, rocking back and forth on his huge feet. "He's a heavyweight. A good, tough boy, too! Why?"

"You know that schoolboy which is tryin' to make Gladys?" grins Pete.

Jerry nods, puzzled.

"Well, he's goin' to fight Young Farrell on the tenth in Joisey City!" cackles Pete. "Don't scream!"

"Like Kelly is!" gasps Jerry, staring amazedly at me. "Is that level?"

I nodded a proud yes.

"Well, all I got to say is 'at your boy friend is due for a piece of grief!' pronounces Jerry. "This Farrell will give him the cuffin' of his life and then knock him off! How long since this college guy's been a pug?"

"He begins with Young Farrell!" I says.

"And finishes at the same place!" gleefully howls Pete, while Jerry's roar of laughter startled the entire lobby.

Don't you love that?

I hesitated a long time before I declared Hazel in, but when I finally did, craving the sympathy of my own sex, she surprised me. I was set for some feline remarks about Bennie that would probably drive me three feet past the brink of lunacy, but instead, Hazel put her arms around me and kissed me, saying that while she wished Ben had been a rich billionaire rather than a budding pugilist, she'd be nice to him for my sake and would go with me to see his first false step. Really, Hazel's a perfect dear when she wants to be, but the trouble is, she wants to be so seldom!

Well, the night of Ben's battle with Young Farrell rolled around terribly fast, it seemed to me, and, oh, what a night it was! Ben had to go over to Jersey City early in the afternoon with his manager and while my hero was blithe enough, honestly, I felt fearful. It was like sending him away to the gallows or something, no fooling! Benjamin's bout was merely a preliminary to some big championship contest and don't ask me who the champions were because I've forgotten all about 'em. In fact, I didn't even wait to see the main event—Ben and this Young Farrell showed me all the boxing gloves I cared to witness for that evening, at least!

As Jerry and Pete had nobly volunteered to escort me and Hazel to the fight and as I wanted these two knockers to see my Ben lay Young Farrell low, I had Bennie get me four ringside tickets. Ben's colorful manager, Jimmy Clinch, said the seats were so close to Ben's corner that if they were any nearer he'd give us all sponges and water bottles and let us act as Ben's seconds. Really, James was truthful, whatever his other faults! We arrived in the nick of time at the shambles where the assault and battery was to take place, for Ben and Young Farrell were already being formally introduced to the cheering and wildly excited thousands. Trailing down an aisle behind a hoarse-voiced usher who I'd hate to meet alone on a dark street, I thought before we stopped he was going to lead us right into the ring with the boxers! Honestly, our seats were literally jammed up against the ropes and I felt horribly embarrassed when some of the reporters and others in the first rows craned their necks for a view of us as we sat down. It was a horse

from another stable with Hazel, Jerry and Pete! These three inveterate spotlight addicts were tickled silly at getting some attention on their entrance and tried to look as important as they weren't.

There was a vacant seat beside me and into it flopped Ben's manager, just as the bell rang and every light in the place went out except the glaring battery of bulbs directly over the ring. With the rest of the house pitch dark, these threw the two fighters out in merciless relief and when it came to comparisons, Ben certainly got all the best of it. As a man behind me enthusiastically remarked, he looked more like a million dollars than the currency itself! It struck me that if Benjamin failed as a professional assailant, he could make a comfortable existence posing for artists and sculptors—from the top of his glistening, carefully combed hair to the bottom of his swiftly moving feet, sliding smoothly over the canvas as he stepped briskly around Young Farrell, the smiling Bennie was a beautiful picture. Farrell, broken-nosed, hairy-chested, bull-necked and sullen, only made my friend look more handsome, if a thing like that was possible.

Apart from their looks, they seemed evenly matched. The mob buzzed like the droning of a million bees. I know not how others may have felt, but as for me, I was fairly tingling!

At the start, the gallery was with Young Farrell and the boys in the costly seats devoutly wanted Ben to win. But after they had done nothing more than dance cautiously around each other for about a minute, the entire crowd began to give them both the razzberry. There were violent bellows of "Make 'em fight!" and, really, Pete Kift almost split my eardrums with a bawling, "Hey, why don't you lead, you big stiff!"

"Who's a big stiff?" I demanded, turning indignantly on him.

"Both of 'em!" says Pete, disgustedly.

"Make him come to you, Ben!" hollers Jimmy Clinch. "Never mind the crowd—we're fightin' this guy!"

"Why don't you send him in, Jimmy?" a reporter bends over to ask.

"Because I don't want him to go out!" is Jimmy's rather odd reply.

"Good Heavens, but he is the handsome thing!" murmurs Hazel, gazing up entranced at Ben's rippling muscles and flashing smile.

"Look him over a few minutes from now, kid!" growls Jerry, curling his lip. "This Farrell's goin' to retread 'at pretty pan of his!"

The raucous comments of the angry customers seemed to somewhat peeve Young Farrell and he struck out at Ben with his left hand. Ben easily ducked away from the blow and instantly shot his own right glove to his *titic-tit*'s chin. Honestly, the results of that witty comeback were startling and brought the big house to its feet, yelling madly! Farrell staggered backwards almost the full length (Continued on page 140)



We trailed down the aisle behind a hoarse-voiced usher who I'd hate to meet alone on a dark street.

By ARNOLD BENNETT
A Story of the Imperfections of

Illustrations by
R. L. Lambdin

THE yacht Aphra was sailing down the Channel, and the company, which consisted of the owner (usually addressed as Jackie) and Mr. and Mrs. Proctor were having tea on deck. The skipper was at the wheel, the engineer was in the engine room, and the rest of the crew lounged about forward. The yacht Aphra was a ketch of one hundred and twenty-five tons, and whenever she put into a minor port she was referred to in the local press as "the fine ketch," because no yacht of any size is allowed to put into a minor port without a complimentary adjective.

With just a breath of wind dead aft, the yacht Aphra was on an even keel; her sails were wide outspread; the engine was helping the sails. The sea was smooth; and empty, save for one or two tramp steamers in the offing. At a distance of four or five miles low undulating hills, with an occasional cove, cliff, village, church-steeple, white tape of road, were all that could be descried of that enigmatic, weird, self-sufficient isle, England. The sun shone; half-concealed within its warm rays was the tang, the nip, which throughout the English summer wholesomely reminds humanity that winter is not far behind and winter not far ahead. In a word the scene was one of ideal peace and felicity, and nobody could have guessed that a tremendous upset—moral, not physical—was about to happen.

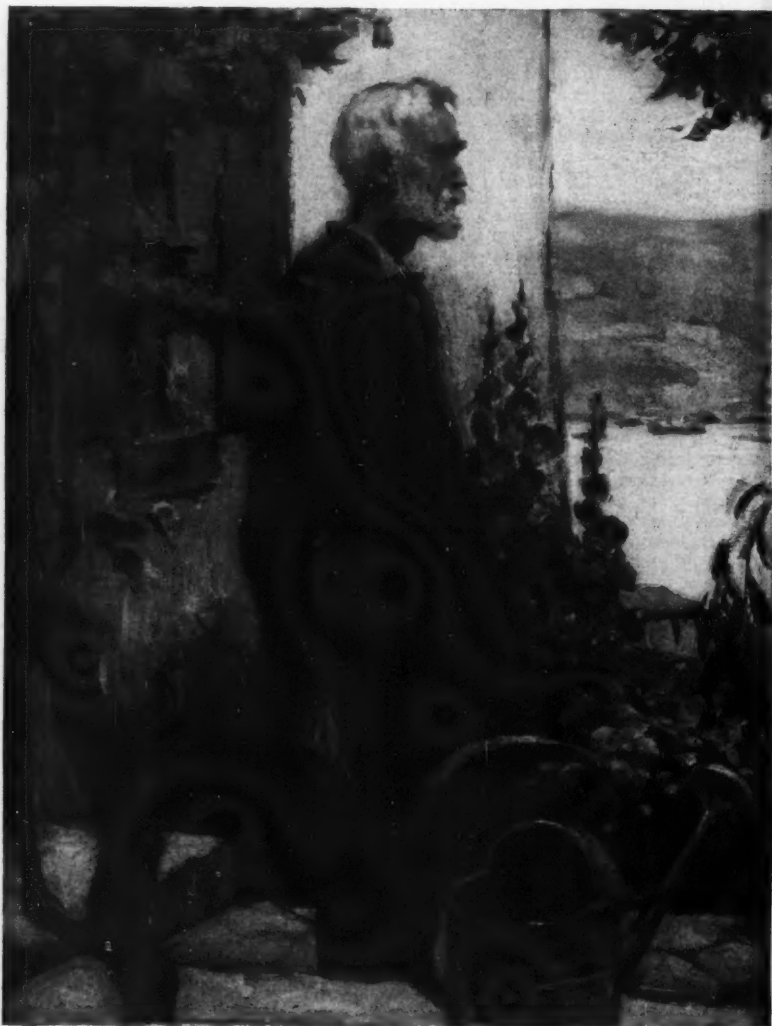
The huge mainsail suddenly flapped with a report like thunder.

"This wind is getting tired of life," said the owner, who often spoke in metaphors and images, and he rose and went and sat on the poop on the opposite side of the wheel from the captain. He was a stoutish man of fifty or more; so was the captain; the chief difference between them seemed to be that the captain had brass buttons while the owner hadn't.

In a few minutes the owner returned to the slightly-swaying tea-table.

"Look here," said he. "I don't know so much about this sailing-all-night business tonight. Glass is rising. There'll soon be a dead calm. Of course we shall carry the tide for another two hours, but after that, with the tide against us, we shall do no good with the engine alone, especially round the Nose. Moreover the engineer can't be expected to work all the clock round. So I think we'll just drop an anchor in Polpooe, and leave early in the morning—say seven-thirty. We shan't be losing any time, and we shall have a quiet night." Which was not what he thought, but what the captain thought. He always came back full of marine knowledge and wisdom from chats with the captain.

"Polpooe?" cried Mrs. Proctor, with surprising vivacity. "Are we near Polpooe? Why didn't you tell us? That's where Elizabeth lives."



"Elizabeth will be sorry to miss you," said Mr.

The social atmosphere of the deck was changed in an instant; waves of excitement radiated from Mrs. Proctor and disturbed the serenity of her husband and the owner. She was a little woman, slim, lively, dynamic. Her complexion might be in ruins, but not her eyes and her emotions. Though the twenty-fifth anniversary of her wedding was nigh, though she had two daughters and two sons, all of whom were adult or adolescent, and all of whom could and did attempt to give her lessons in everything from lipsticks to politics, she still violently counted with men, and on them, and could be as wilful, capricious, naughty and charming as a girl.

Mr. Proctor lazily agreed that Polpooe was where Elizabeth lived. Mr. Proctor was rather a big man, who knew all about women through the study of his wife—his wife being all women rolled into one—and was cheerfully if sardonically resigned to the facts of nature.

"I must call on her tonight," announced Mrs. Proctor.

"But look here, Tikky, why?" Mr. Proctor protested. (Her name was Marcella, and nobody, not even Mr. Proctor, knew why he called her Tikky. By the way, her children called her Tikky too.)

"You can't go calling on people like that!"

"Elizabeth isn't 'people.'"

f The Perfect Husband



Draver. "I'll tell her you called." "How kind you are," thought Mrs. Proctor in fury.

"But it's only by chance we're going into Polpooe. Supposing the wind had held——"

"What's the good of supposing?" Mrs. Proctor demanded. "Men are so queer. We are going into Polpooe, and I couldn't possibly go there without calling to see Elizabeth. She'd never forgive me."

"She wouldn't know anything about it."

"But I should know, silly!"

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Proctor, and turning to the owner: "Look here, Jackie, if I were you I should refuse to have a boat lowered."

"Jackie wouldn't be so disgusting, would you, Jackie?" Mrs. Proctor took the owner's hand and smiled at him, the smile of the unscrupulous enchantress. "Elizabeth's one of my best friends. She was a bridesmaid at my wedding. I haven't seen her for twenty-five years, but we write to each other every year and tell each other *everything*. Now don't be horrid, Jackie . . . And you'll have to come with me, Arthur."

Arthur groaned.

Off and on Mrs. Proctor talked about Elizabeth until the yacht Aphra dropped an anchor in Polpooe harbor.

"Oh, what a lovely little place!" cried Mrs. Proctor, and kept on crying, "Oh, what a lovely little place!" And it was indeed

a pleasing small port, with hills on either side, and the houses of a tiny town climbing up them.

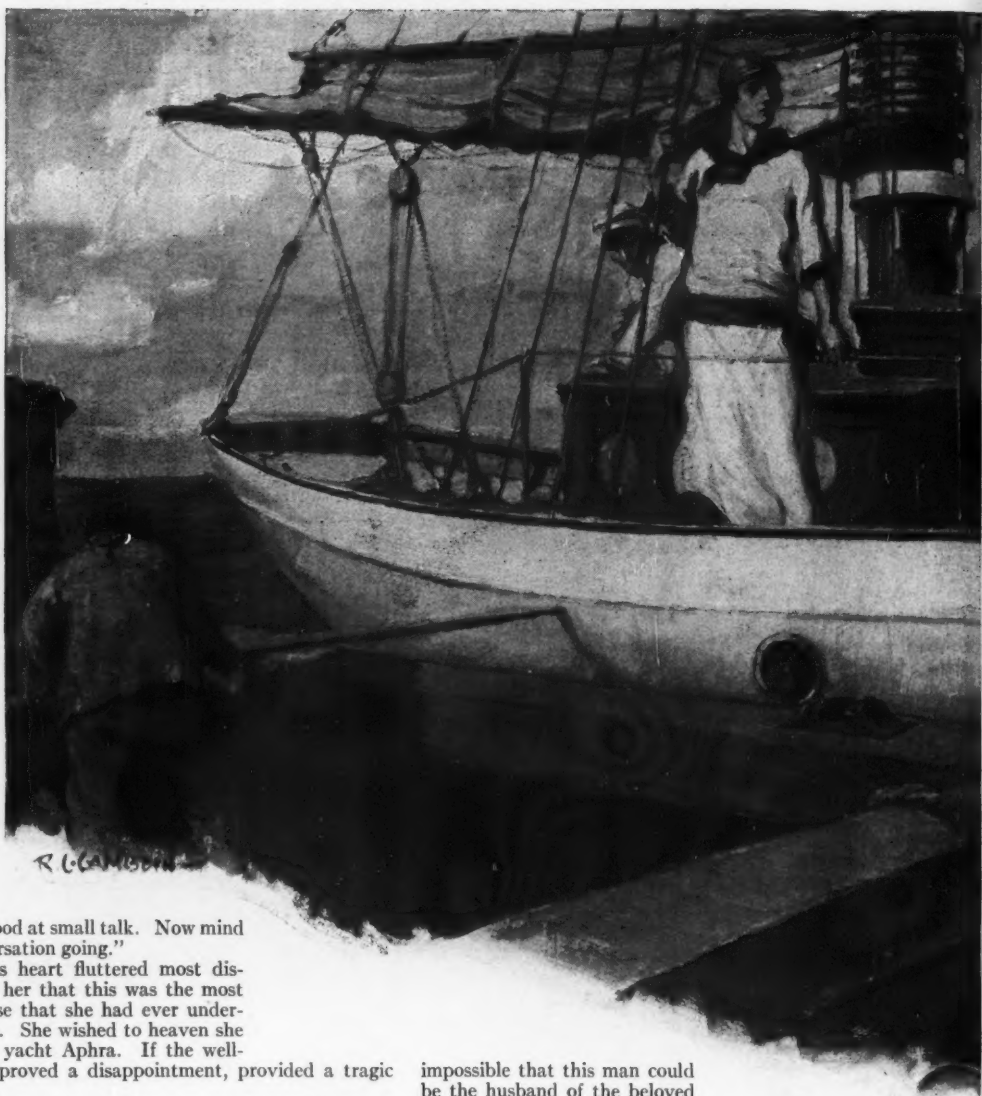
"Oh! And there's Elizabeth's house!" cried Mrs. Proctor, pointing to a green-clad residence with a steeply sloping garden that ended in a long, curved, irregular flight of stone steps leading down to the sea's level.

"How do you know it's Elizabeth's house?" asked Mr. Proctor, stroking his bald cranium.

"From the photographs, of course, stupid! . . . Jackie, don't bother to have the launch lowered. I know it's an awful lot of trouble. We'll go in the dingey."

Soon after the sails had been stowed, two tired mariners lowered the dingey, and Mr. and Mrs. Proctor, somewhat titivated for the occasion, stepped into it and were rowed ashore and presently were seen from the yacht breasting the slope towards Elizabeth's house. Mrs. Proctor continued to laud Elizabeth and to express her absolute certainty that Elizabeth would be just the same as she had ever been. Nevertheless as she and Arthur entered the porch of Elizabeth's abode Mrs. Proctor was seized with a great fear and terrible apprehension.

"It's a ticklish affair," thought she, "seeing someone you haven't seen for five and twenty years. I feel frightfully awkward. I shan't know what to say to her. Supposing she's . . .



Arthur, you're so good at small talk. Now mind you keep the conversation going."

The little thing's heart fluttered most disturbingly. It told her that this was the most dangerous enterprise that she had ever undertaken in all her life. She wished to heaven she had never left the yacht Aphra. If the well-beloved Elizabeth proved a disappointment, provided a tragic disillusion . . . !

Ages seemed to pass. Mrs. Proctor, restless, looked round at the coarsely carved wood of the porch, at the cheap imitation stained glass in the door. Suburban! No, provincial! She felt the nocturnal deadness of the little town. She was ashamed that her husband should see the environment in which lived the adorable Elizabeth, whom she was always vaunting to him. She was about to say to him, "Nobody in. No use waiting any longer," when the door slowly opened, and as she saw it opening Mrs. Proctor had a sense of disappointment. She would have preferred that nobody should be in. Strangeness of human nature!

A middle-aged, rather unkempt, and lanky man stood in the doorway. He had a mustache, a beard, neither of which would Mrs. Proctor have tolerated in a husband. A bony and apprehensive face! Disheveled gray hair! A brown suit that in the friction and strain of life had lost both shape and pattern! One pocket bulged with a garden trowel; the other bulged with articles unseen—no doubt pipes and pouches and matches and things. The man must have long since ceased to care what he looked like.

"Oh! Good evening," Mrs. Proctor began, impulsively, desperately.

"Good evening," said the man coldly, and added: "We don't let rooms."

"Oh, it's not that!" protested Mrs. Proctor. "I—we—just called to see Mrs. Draver. I—"

"Mrs. Draver is not in this evening," said the man, still coldly; but he did suggest: "Can I do anything?"

"Are you Mr. Draver?" Mrs. Proctor asked with a distressing attempt at a seductive smile, and death in her heart. It was

impossible that this man could be the husband of the beloved Elizabeth!

"Yes," said he.

Mrs. Proctor glanced at Mr. Proctor for help, because Mr.

Proctor had the kind of personality everyone found delightful.

"Our name is Proctor," said Mr. Proctor with the whole of his charm. "We're yachting down the coast, and as we've put in here for the night my wife thought—"

"Proctor? Proctor?" murmured Mr. Draver blankly.

"Yes," exploded Mrs. Proctor impatiently. "I'm Marcella—Tikky."

"Ah, yes!" Mr. Draver seemed to be drawing up something long forgotten from the deepest depths of memory. "Ah, yes!" And then again: "Yes, yes!" And then an original idea visited him. "Do come in," he said, as if saying: "We're in a great difficulty. Somebody must act, and I suppose I'd better act."

He went even further and shook hands.

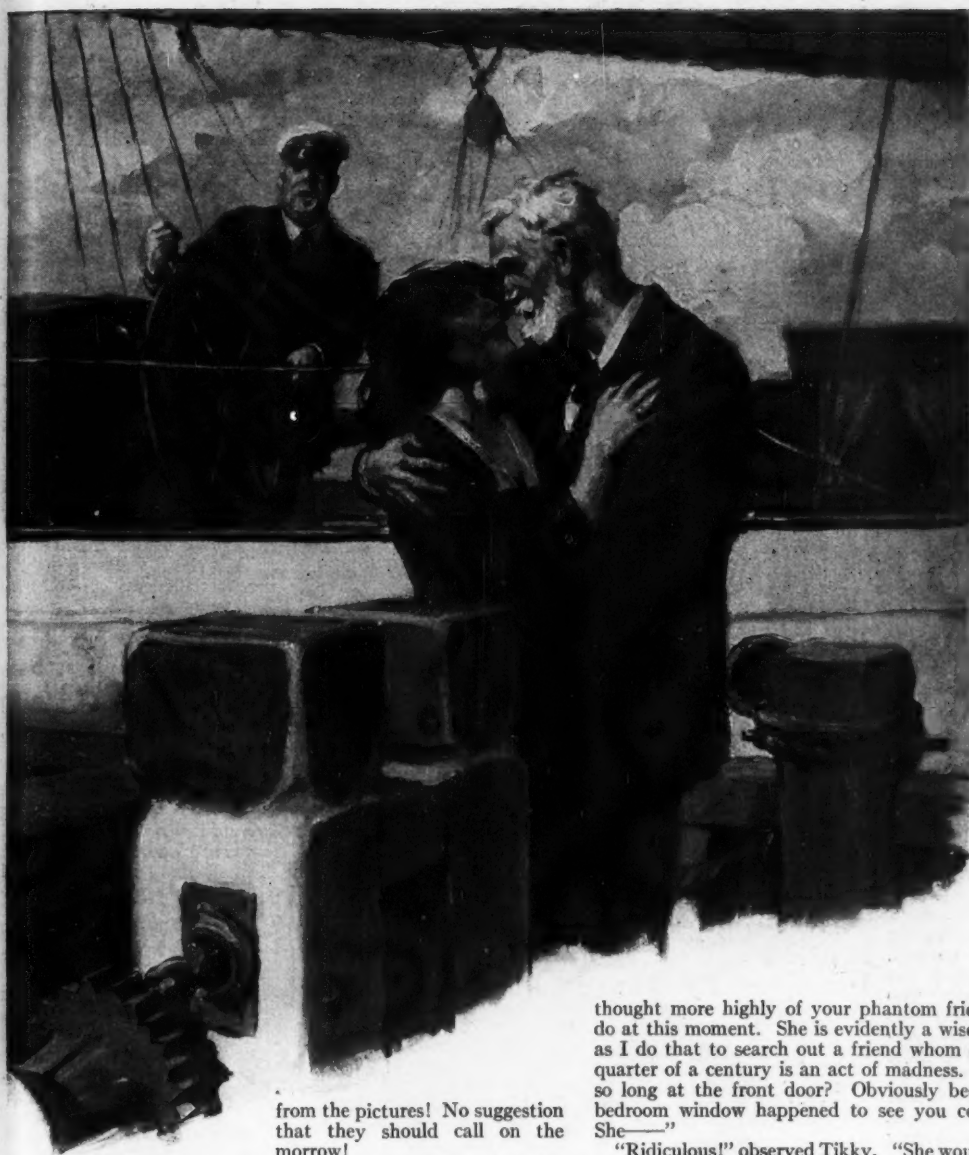
"Come through into the garden, will you? It's a beautiful evening. I was just pottering about and watering. You fond of gardening? Elizabeth's gone to the pictures with the mayor." (A sort of naïve satisfaction in the word 'mayor'!) "She hasn't been out at night for months. I never go out at night myself. Doesn't suit me. Lovely view here, isn't it?"

It was a lovely view, and Mr. and Mrs. Proctor said so with perhaps exaggerated enthusiasm.

"Elizabeth will be sorry to miss you," said Mr. Draver. "But I'll tell her you've called."

"How kind you are!" thought Mrs. Proctor in fury.

No suggestion that they should wait until Elizabeth returned



Mrs. Draver had leaped from the yacht's rail into the coal barge, and a hatless old man was kissing her.

from the pictures! No suggestion that they should call on the morrow!

"I expect you'll be leaving again early tomorrow," said Mr. Draver.

"I'm afraid we shall," said Mr. Proctor. "You see, we mustn't miss the west-going tide. The skipper says we ought to weigh anchor not later than eight o'clock."

"Elizabeth *never* gets up early," said Mr. Draver with much sincerity and conviction. "Servant doesn't get up till eight o'clock. They won't, you know, in these days. It's *her* night out, too."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Mr. Proctor simply, as they descended the slope again towards the quay. "Great Scott!"

Mrs. Proctor ejaculated nothing at all. She was thinking: "So that's my Elizabeth's life!" And the thought filled all her mind, and devastated it, and was unutterable.

"The whole thing is perfectly plain to me," said the owner, when the trio were sitting in the green-tinted saloon and he had heard the story—or rather had heard two different stories, one sardonic from Arthur Proctor, and one resentful and half-tragic from Tikky.

"What's perfectly plain to you?" Mrs. Proctor demanded, quite ready for a shindy with her host and determined to tolerate playful nonsense from nobody.

"I will interpret this dark matter, lady. And you shall see a great light," Jackie smiled teasingly.

Mrs. Proctor raised a warning finger. "I don't mind what you do as long as you don't try to be funny. I can't stand funniness tonight."

"My dear Tikky," said the owner, "let me say that I never

thought more highly of your phantom friend Elizabeth than I do at this moment. She is evidently a wise woman. She thinks as I do that to search out a friend whom one hasn't seen for a quarter of a century is an act of madness. Why were you kept so long at the front door? Obviously because Elizabeth at a bedroom window happened to see you coming up the street. She——"

"Ridiculous!" observed Tikky. "She wouldn't have recognized me after all that time."

"Not recognized you, my dear Tikky! I've known you for more than a quarter of a century, and I assure you that you haven't changed in the least."

Mrs. Proctor told him not to be absurd, but in spite of herself she could not help believing him.

He went on: "To resume. Your Elizabeth saw you from her bedroom window, where she was probably turning down the bed—or beds—the servant being out, and conscientiously imitating the ways of servants by taking a spell off to watch the interesting street. 'That's Tikky!' said she to herself, horror-struck, and ran down into the garden to her husband to tell him to lie to you. She had grasped in an instant that it would be fatal for you and her to meet again. She taught her somewhat stupid husband exactly what to say to you, and in what tone, and then she fled upstairs again, and no doubt leaned over the banisters to peep at you going through the house."

"And now she's making her husband repeat to her everything that you said in the garden and congratulating herself on having preserved her dearest illusion—namely, yourself. For twenty-five years you've been growing more and more perfect in her eyes, just as she's been growing more and more perfect in yours. And she was bent on keeping you perfect. Yes, a wise woman, your Elizabeth! I should have liked to make her acquaintance. Of course her illusions about you may have been a bit damaged by what bit she saw of you and heard of you, but speaking broadly——"

The Perfect Husband

The oration was cut short by Mrs. Proctor snatching a handful of cigarets from the box and wildly flinging them at her host's features.

"Never mind, Tikky!" Arthur Proctor soothed his wife, benevolently.

The owner laughed. Husband and wife retired to their cabin. But in the wakeful middle of the night Tikky reflected: "Did she keep out of my way on purpose? Did she keep out of my way on purpose?"

The next morning was marvelous. Tikky, lying in her bunk, watched a spot of earliest sunlight wander up and down the wall of the cabin as the yacht Aphra swayed very gently in the water. There, in the opposite bunk, lay the immense mountainous form of Arthur, sleeping as usual just like a child. Nothing less than the wrecking of the ship would wake Arthur. He slept peacefully even through the deck-scrubbing, which, to those below, presented the characteristics of something apocalyptic and final in the earth's history. Well, Tikky had to get up. Why? Foolish creature, she wanted to gaze across the sunlit water at Elizabeth's house. She arose. She contented herself with a cold bath (for the routine of the yacht Aphra must not be disarranged), and she dressed summarily, in an athletic or sporting fashion, and hid her hair in a sort of mob-cap contrived out of one of Arthur's colored silk handkerchiefs. Then she went and sat in the deck-house, and she gazed across the sunlit water at Elizabeth's house, with its hanging garden and its long flight of stone steps descending to the sea's edge, and it was just as beautiful as she had imagined. The whole port had the air of being enchanted.

Then, glancing below, she saw Bill, the senior steward, punctual to the minute, on his way to her cabin with two large cups of tea and a plate of bread and butter.

"Here, Bill," said she. "I'll have mine here. Wake Mr. Proctor and give him his, will you?" And she took her cup and two pieces of bread and butter.

But instead of drinking and eating she gazed and dreamed. Twenty-five years married, with offsprings who taught their mamma how to suck eggs? Not a bit. She was a young girl—and Elizabeth was a young girl.

Half way between the shore and the yacht a rowboat was approaching, with a rough-clad fisherman in it and a woman.

"Am I going to faint?" thought Tikky, and it seemed to her that life was leaving her as she suspected, guessed, divined that the woman was Elizabeth. (Elizabeth, who never got up early!) Never was a young virginal girl more excited, more ecstatic, more purely thrilled than the mother of four adults in that dizzy moment. Her faith in her own sex and in humanity returned like a great tide and swamped every other conviction. She sprang up, ran on to the deck and stood over the bulwarks. The boat was a thousand years in reaching the yacht Aphra's side.

"Elizabeth!"

"Tikky!"

The names were whispered as though the women had a secret to share. The deck was deserted, the crew being now at breakfast. No gangway had been let down, because the yacht Aphra was a self-contained unit that morning and nobody had to go ashore. But Elizabeth seized hold of the mizzen shrouds and hauled herself over the bulwarks with the agility of a child. (It was wonderful!) The fisherman murmured that he had to pay a call at a neighboring schooner and would come back for the lady in half an hour.

"Come, come!" whispered Tikky in agitation, and, having cruelly hugged her, led Elizabeth through the deck-house down the staircase. There was an unoccupied deck-cabin, and into this Tikky pushed her friend. It was the sole place in the yacht Aphra where the cronies would be safe from intrusion.

"Darling, you haven't changed a bit."

"Nor you!"

They spoke quite sincerely. Each of these fond middle-aged creatures saw in the other a mere girl.

"Wait!" said Tikky, and skipped out of the cabin and fetched first her tea and bread and butter from the deck-house and second Arthur's tea and bread and butter (the giant still slept), and she shut the door of the cabin. And Tikky sat on the bunk and Elizabeth sat on a chair, and they drank and ate and looked at one another and gradually perceived the mature women in the girls.

"You silly!" said Elizabeth, in just her old remembered somewhat caustic tone. "You're crying into your tea!"

"I know I am, and I don't care!" Tikky replied gruffly, with just her old remembered tone of sturdy defiance.

"I suppose you wonder what on earth I do with myself all the year round in this little pudding-basin of a place," said Elizabeth, breaking the first little silence that had occurred in their talk. This was after they had been "at it" for some time.

"No, I don't," said Tikky, admiring Elizabeth's graphic phrase "pudding-basin of a place"—so characteristic of her, as Tikky now recalled. "I'm jolly sure you find plenty of interesting things to do."

"That, infant, is a whopper. You know I don't," said Elizabeth calmly, and looked Tikky full in the eyes.

Elizabeth had a shrewd, tolerant, somehow negligent face. She was a large woman, not stout, but spaciouly built. Her hair was still as black as coal. Although the hour was early she had several fine rings on her fingers, and she was excellently dressed, and with much care!

"Is it a whopper?"

"It is a whopper. Ever since you called last night to see me, you've been adding up the situation and you've been asking yourself what in the name of heaven I do with myself here. Me, the high-spirited young thing that used to go to two parties a night and make havoc among a whole sex. Do you think I don't know what my reputation was?"

"Well, what in the name of heaven do you do with yourself then? Your Jimmy is engineering in Durham. Your Anna is learning frock-making in Kensington. You were never one for reforming the poor against their will. You've nobody—"

"Except my husband," Elizabeth interrupted quickly and positively.

"That was what I was going to say," Tikky agreed, almost guiltily, fearing lest the perspicacious Elizabeth was already reading her secret thoughts about Mr. Draver, whom Tikky certainly regarded as the dullest, flattest, stupidest, untidiest, most commonplace of created males. Here indeed was the disconcerting problem for Tikky: how could Elizabeth stand her husband?

"Now, I'll tell you what I do. If it's fine I sit in the garden and admire the view up the coast. And if it's wet I sit inside at the window and admire the view up the coast. You won't deny it's a marvelous view. Also if I feel particularly energetic I watch my husband gardening. As for going out of a night, never in the world! Last night at the (Continued on page 150)

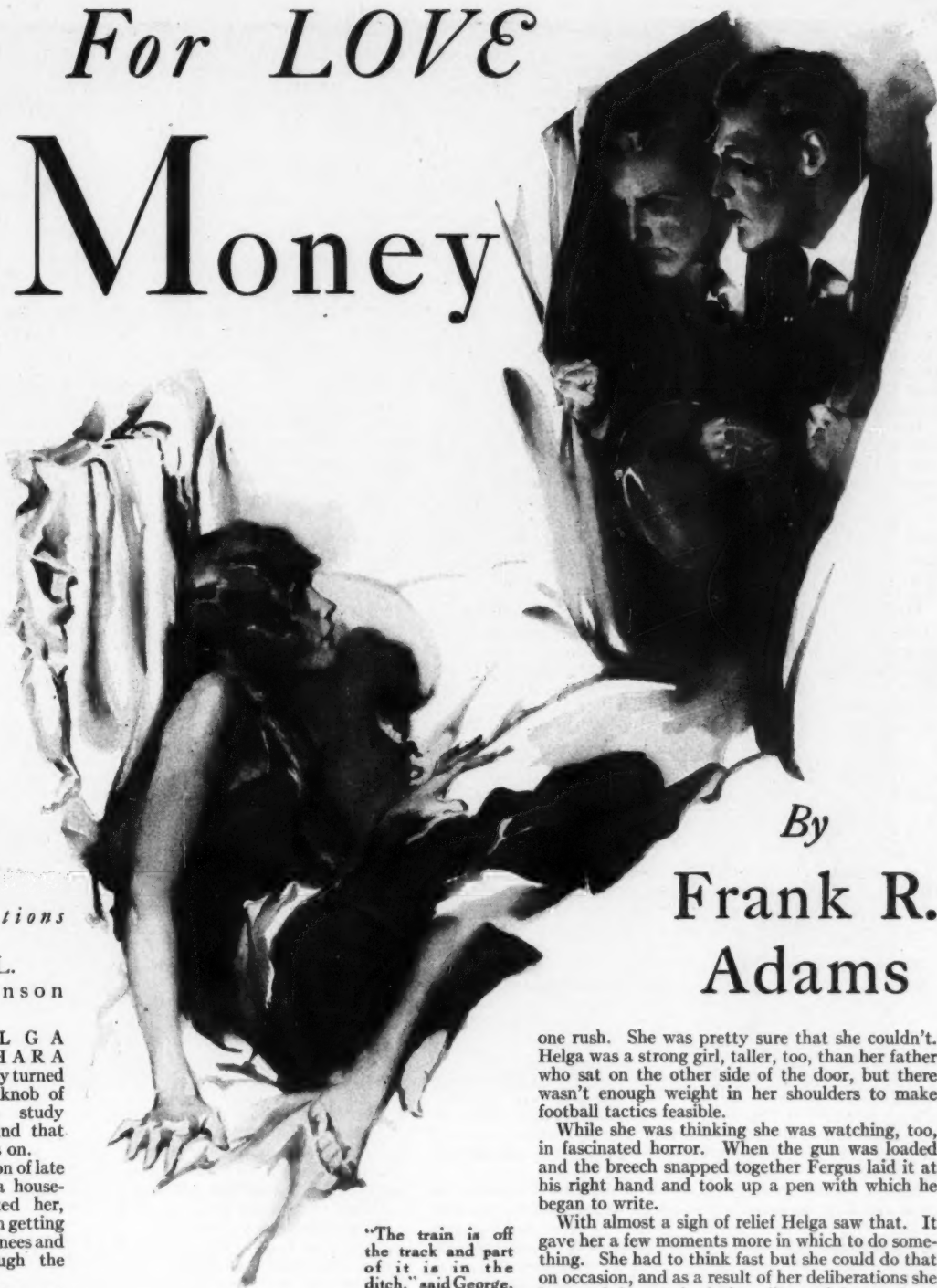
A Bit of British Fun

By George Belcher



Cockney Lady (pointing to daughter)—I've had 'er vaccinated and I've had 'er confirmed, but nothing don't seem to cheer 'er up.

For LOVE Or Money



Illustrations
by
Leslie L.
Benson

By
Frank R.
Adams

HELGA O'HARA softly turned the knob of her father's study door and found that the catch was on.

The situation of late in the O'Hara household warranted her, she thought, in getting down on her knees and looking through the keyhole.

Fergus O'Hara sat at his slab log desk

made especially for him by—but that doesn't matter; all of the house was built and furnished to be in keeping with the woods country where it was located.

He had a revolver in his hand, one that had been given him by Sergeant Mannihan of the Mounted after the fight at the Tramping Lake shack. He was loading—with one solitary cartridge.

Helga had an uncharacteristic desire to scream which she stifled before it became a motor impulse. Perhaps the fact that he was loading that weapon with one bullet might not mean much but considering the way things had been going recently it probably did. As soon as she got over her Irish and feminine emotion and allowed her more phlegmatic northern blood an inning, she wondered first of all if she could break in the door with

one rush. She was pretty sure that she couldn't. Helga was a strong girl, taller, too, than her father who sat on the other side of the door, but there wasn't enough weight in her shoulders to make football tactics feasible.

While she was thinking she was watching, too, in fascinated horror. When the gun was loaded and the breech snapped together Fergus laid it at his right hand and took up a pen with which he began to write.

With almost a sigh of relief Helga saw that. It gave her a few moments more in which to do something. She had to think fast but she could do that on occasion, and as a result of her deliberations she hastened downstairs in her slippers and out of doors.

For a second or so she stood under her father's window considering the rain spout which led up to the roof—wondering how much her weight had increased since last she had shinned up that precarious tube, wondering, too, if any of the supports had rusted through since she was a kid.

She did not wonder long, though. She kicked off her slippers, dropped her dressing gown and started up, gripping the fortunately corrugated metal pipe with capable hands and silk pajamaed knees.

The rain spout held and Helga was still enough of a tomboy to go up by the same elevator that a fireman usually comes down.

The screens at the windows in the O'Hara mansion were fastened in the casings by two turn buttons, one on either side.

"The train is off the track and part of it is in the ditch," said George.

Helga unfastened the one that was near the rain spout and loosened the screen sash a little without making any noise.

Then with practically one movement she yanked the screen out and let it fall to the ground while she swung her leg over the sill and into the room.

He had the gun muzzle at his heart.

"Hello, dad," said Helga casually, pretending not even to notice the revolver. "I tore my panties I guess on your old-fashioned fire escape."

She examined critically a triangular gash in the black silk on the inside of her left leg just above the knee. The lovely flesh underneath was scratched a little too and she rubbed it tenderly. "I'll have that rain spout sandpapered before I use it again when I'm coming in late from the club."

With her cream-fair skin and the mass of smooth orange tawny hair she didn't look so bad in black, especially when you considered that she carried herself like one of those statues of Diana you see in every museum and that there was nothing the least buxom about her figure, just alight curves here and there to indicate which sex she had finally decided to belong to.

Her father had dropped the gun in a drawer while she had been looking at the damage to her person and now sat confronting her with a gaze that was half truculence and half admiration. He couldn't help admiring Helga no matter what she did. She knew that and had often imposed on him by reason of that knowledge.

"I'm so glad I've trained you to smoke cigarets part of the time, Fergus," she observed as she helped herself to one of them from an open package on his desk, lighted it and started to sit down. "It's all right, isn't it," she asked, hesitating, "if I park here for a few minutes before I turn in?"

Her father grunted inarticulately. It was his first contribution to the conversation. She sat down anyway in a deep chair and hung one bare foot over the arm. Her mother, had she seen her, would have been scandalized at the idea of any young lady acting the way Helga did but her mother had been buried for nine years in an old-country family plot not far from the fjords where during all the later years of her life in America she had secretly longed to be.

By no stretch of the imagination could Fergus O'Hara say that his daughter reminded him of his wife save possibly that they both had fair complexions and both were beautiful. Because Mrs. O'Hara had never ceased to be a Norsewoman in spite of her Irish name and nearly twenty years' residence in Canada and in the States.

"Now that we're here," Helga finally observed, having decided that he was not going to open the conversation, "suppose you read out loud that note which you intended me to read to myself tomorrow morning while I was waiting for the coroner to get here."

Her father tried to be mad but only succeeded in being ashamed. There is probably nothing so embarrassing as being alive ten minutes after you expected to be dead.

So he laughed—but uneasily. "Indeed I'll read you nothing," he declared, tearing to bits the piece of paper which had lain on his desk.

Helga realized how poignantly her dad was suffering from humiliation and that if she were really going to save him from himself or whatever bugaboo was threatening she must align herself on his side of the fence, and that speedily, before he classed her with all the rest of the world which he apparently thought was against him.

She got up and perched on his desk on the same side as his own chair and took his hand. "I've always brought all my troubles to you, dad, from splinters in my fingers to compound fractures in my cardiac contraption. Don't you think it's about time you returned the compliment and let me in on what ails you?"

"Is it money? If so, there's me jewels including the best dollar watch that ever dented a cement sidewalk."

Fergus shook his head. "It isn't money—at least not entirely. There's disgrace and a sort of a final feeling of 'What's the use?'"

"That last is more serious, I'll admit," Helga considered soberly. "Us Irish are often afflicted with it."

"What do you mean, us Irish?" demanded her father in the formula of an ancient family joke. "If you're Irish, then the Emperor of China is an Irishman too. Go along with you, you big Viking."

By which token Helga knew that the tension had lessened a little. So she returned to the attack.

"Just what is the cause of this uselessness feeling? Have you been reading somebody's articles about the cussedness of being fifty and really believing that the flappers don't care about fox-trotting with you any more? Your hair may be a little thin,

maybe both of 'em are, but you're the most interestin' devil south of Hudson's Bay—especially to women."

Fergus groaned—and then grinned. "That's just the trouble, Hel." He called her that in their more intimate conversations. "What? Again?"

"Just why do you say, 'Again?'"

"That's right. I'm not supposed to know about the affair with the Hamilton woman, or Mrs. Sykes, or that girl in Minneapolis, or the others, am I?"

"But you do?"

"More or less."

"How in the name of the saints did you find out?"

"Do you think you can stand a bit of a shock?"

"Yes." He moistened his lips.

"Well, mother told me about the first one or two."

"Your mother? But she never said anything to me."

"No. That was mother's way."

"I never understood her."

"You aren't the only husband in that fix regarding his own wife. Mother didn't blame you, or never said so to me anyway. I was only a kid of thirteen when she sort of felt that she was going away and turned you over to my care. She said, 'Most every man will start in to make a fool of himself about every once in so often and that's the time when a man's woman, if she loves him at all, will stand by and help him back to where she is without his ever knowing it.' She loved you so much herself that she could understand why other women were attracted to you, too. But she knew how to protect her own."

"You're too nice to be allowed to wander around loose. Some woman is sure to annex you pretty soon. I only want to make sure it's the right kind of a one. Mother had the ancient idea that a woman is sort of a second fiddle, which, being what I am, I can't entirely subscribe to, but I've done the best I could in the past, not without a certain measure of success. The only reason I've come out in the open this time is because things happened a little too fast."

"I didn't know you were in so wrong until I saw you through the keyhole writing me that letter and—well, doing other things you hadn't ought to. I am ashamed to say that in this case I have been so thoroughly off my guard that I don't even know the name of the party of the second part. Who is it?" Then, when he hesitated. "Come across, dad. You have to tell us lawyers everything. We can't lie convincingly unless we have a good basis of truth to start from."

"I didn't think this one was that kind of a woman," Fergus began, sidestepping the direct issue.

"A man never does think that," Helga observed sagely, "not judging from the newspapers anyway. But she was?"

"Apparently. I got this letter yesterday from a man by the name of Hirshfield whom I never heard of but who says he is her brother and who threatens to print all my letters to her if I don't either marry her or pay fifty thousand dollars before the end of the week. This is Thursday."

"H'm." Helga took the letter and bit her lip as she considered it, swinging one bare foot as she did so. "This looks like the usual bromidic threat in such cases. Are these sentences which he mentions in quotation marks actual excerpts from your correspondence?"

"Yes."

"Then he really has the letters. All I've got to say, dad, is that you shake a very wicked pen. With words like those you could convince most any woman you loved her."

"That's just the trouble. I did love her."

Helga raised her eyebrows.

"Honestly I did. This wasn't like the others. I thought I loved this woman with all that there was left of me—not to take the place of your mother, Hel dear, but to grow old with comfortably. You know it isn't so terribly funny to face these last ten or twenty years of life with the thought of no one to be with you when you're sick, or worse than that not to have anybody to take care of when they're sick themselves. When old age comes along you have to make a tiny little world around yourself or else there isn't any world for you at all—you're just alone in a fearfully dark place where you don't know your way about."

Helga looked at him with a new light of understanding. "I get you, dad. And this woman"—she referred to the letter—"this Mrs. Newton seemed to fill the bill."

"She did. She was quiet but alert, if you get what I mean, and she had a lot of tenderness, or seemed to have. I suppose it was all just 'seemed to have' and 'seemed to be.' It was losing my faith in her that made me feel so blue, I guess, that and the idea of



Helga perched on his desk. "I bring all my troubles to you, Dad. Don't you think you ought to return the compliment?"

bringing disgrace on you. I could have stood for being fired from my job with the government."

"Never mind about me. I'm young and strong and nothing makes me sick. Let's look this thing over. Together I shouldn't be surprised if we could make this Mr. Edwin Hirshfield look around for the nearest exit and walk, not run, in that general direction with all possible speed. We haven't got that much money?"

Her father laughed by way of reply.

"Well, there was no harm in asking. Money doesn't seem to care who owns it nowadays and we might have found gold in the back-yard. And you don't want to marry the lady?"

"Not now. Not if she's going to force the issue. You can see what sort of life I'd be stepping into. I'll be my own man or die first."

"All right, Fergus. We'll smoke one more cigaret over the problem. It was hardly to be expected that either of the obvious solutions would be any good."

They talked until nearly daylight. Then Helga changed her torn black silk pajamas for a trim navy-blue tailored suit which for some reason or other made her look like a million dollars even if she hadn't had any sleep, and boarded the Northwest Express

for Chicago, which was the then abiding place of Mrs. Newton and her troublesome relative, Mr. Hirshfield.

"We have now officially and for all time arrived at the parting of the ways."

The scene was not a disrupted home and the speech was not uttered this time, as it has been so frequently, by a heart-broken wife standing, bag in hand, on the threshold.

Quite the contrary. The conversation took place in a drawing room on the Northwest Express, and the speaker was a nice looking tall young man of about thirty. The one whom he addressed was another man slightly larger, especially in circumference.

Neither of them was mad about it. They weren't mad at anybody.

"I don't just see how you get this way, Cass," the second man said. He was sitting on the so-called sofa taking his shoes off for the night. "You and I like each other better than either of us likes any other man in the world, don't we?"

"Yes, but, hang it, you're a billionaire and I'm not worth a nickel more than I've got in my trousers pocket right this minute. I just can't travel with you on my own power and I'm hanged if

I'm going to be the object of any more charity. What business have I got trapesing around the country in Pullman drawing rooms? None, unless I'm willing to be just a satellite. I do like you, George; you're a nice guy in spite of your confounded money, but I'm double dashed if I'll be your poodle dog."

George Cottrell was grieved. "It isn't my fault I've got money, is it? I didn't make it myself—I doubt if I could, even. Why all this sudden feeling on the matter? You haven't minded being around with me before as my guest and I wouldn't know how to act all by myself. I've got so used to you."

"It was all right at first," Cass Hoover conceded. "We'd been pals in the army and I didn't in the least mind sponging on you for a while until I could look around for a job, but do you realize how long I've been doing it? This is the fourth year. Of course I've had some positions during that time but just about when I get nicely started you come along with an invitation to run over to Japan or up to Alaska or some little hay ride like that and I always fall. I'm not a man any more. I'm a he-governess for you."

George had no particular comeback although he viewed the future with distinct gloom. Cass was just the very element in life that he needed. Moody himself, Cass supplied a cheerful balance that drew him out of his fits of depression. George did not make friends easily. Cass did and passed the more desirable of them along. Cass bullied him and made him like things that, left to himself, he would have had a prejudice against, merely from not having investigated.

Not that George was a dunderhead. On the contrary he possessed a serviceable piece of thinking apparatus. As witness:

"Has this sudden desire to shake me got anything whatever to do with having met that tall stunning looking blonde I saw you were chatting with in the observation car this afternoon?"

"Indirectly—yes. She is a lot more charming even than you would guess just from looking at her, but I have no particular hope of ever seeing her again. It will take me too long to make the kind of a pile that will put me in her class.

"But meeting her and thinking about what it would mean to have someone like that running my home made me realize how many kinds of a jackass I was not to get started."

"Look here, Cass—I'll slip you a hundred thousand and you can—"

"Hang it, no. And when I say that I'm confoundedly near crying because I realize what a pal you are and that no one in the world is one-half so generous. It isn't this particular girl or just wanting money that's biting me. I've merely awakened to the fact that I'd hate to make the final audit on my life with nothing more to my credit than I've got now. I'm going to swim out without help, beginning in Chicago tomorrow. Of course we'll see each other—every time you light in the city where I happen to be laboring—but next time I'm going to be a man the same as you are and not a long-haired pet with a ribbon tied around my neck."

George seemed to think that he meant it and brooded in silence. Finally he broke in with, "She is a swell looking girl."

"You know it."



"By the way, Cass, what did you say that her name was?"

"I didn't say because we didn't get that far. She asked me if I noticed the name on a station we had just passed through and I hadn't. After that we swapped generalities. I thought she was a bear but I meant what I said about its not being a case of love or anything like that. To prove it I'm going to introduce you to her tomorrow morning before we get off the train and you can arrange to call and get really acquainted."

"Gee, you don't think she'd stand for a call on that kind of train introduction, do you?"

"You poor boob, of course she will. Do you think there's any girl in the United States and Canada who doesn't know who you are? Mention the name of George Cottrell and—"

George groaned. "Never mind. I don't want to have any



"What has happened?"
cried Mrs. Newton when
they carried the uncon-
scious man into the house.

girl stand for me just because I happen to be one of the richest bachelors in America. No woman ever had a chance to find out whether she liked me personally or not because she always began figuring how she would look in fur-trimmed underwear and a full jeweled limousine. No thank you, keep your little blond playmate. It just happens that I think she is pretty swell myself and I wouldn't care to buy her. Beside, something tells me a man couldn't."

"Then why not meet her and—"

"I'd be afraid to find out that maybe I could. Go to sleep."

Four hours later the Northwest Express ran into the rear end of a slow freight that had inadvertently been allowed to wander onto the track. A lot of freight cars were scattered over the foreground and some of the Pullmans were tipped over and more or less telescoped from the shock of the collision.

Messrs. Hoover and Cottrell managed to dress and get out without a mishap of any sort unless you count the fact that each of them, in the excitement, had grabbed the other fellow's coat and put it on. An error of that sort in respect to trousers would have been distinctly noticeable but above the waist they were near enough of a size so that in the dim gray dawn the fit seemed perfect, even to the men themselves.

Finding themselves intact their first impulse was to help other passengers who might not be so fortunate and they started searching the Pullmans for any who might be imprisoned.

"I wonder where the deuce she can be," said George when they had been through all the cars which had been turned over.

Cass laughed. "So you were thinking about the same passenger that I was. I admit she is too wonderful to get out of a man's mind. Let's go through again frankly looking for her. Nearly everybody else seems to be out anyway and so far as I can see not much the worse for wear."

They found her this time. She affected black pajamas and had another suit of them on now.

She was still in her berth and had not wakened when it had rolled sideways under her.

The two men thought she was dead at first and stood looking as if at an angel that had fallen to earth at their feet. Automatically they removed their hats.

Finally their prolonged stare wakened her where mere noise and jar had failed. She opened her eyes and then laughed.

"Hello," she said. "Is my bath ready, James, or are you gentlemen merely a committee from the Republican National Convention come to announce my nomination as candidate for election to the presidency of the United States?"

"The train is off the track and part of it is lying in the ditch," volunteered George.

Helga's faculties came back to her with a rush. "Gee, I must have been sleeping like the dead not to have noticed it. That's because I didn't go to bed at all the night before, I guess. What day is this?"

"Saturday," Cass replied, "September fifteen."

"When will the next train for Chicago go through here?"

"Not until they get the remains of this one out of the way, that's a cinch."

"But I've got to be in Chicago right away," she wailed. "They had no right to let this train get wrecked. I wonder how far it is."

"Must be over two hundred miles," George computed. "We weren't due until nine o'clock and it's barely daylight now. We were running an hour late, too, when I turned in last night. Probably that's one of the reasons for the smash-up."

"If they were going to have a wreck at all it's too bad it wasn't a worse one," Helga yawned, stifling at the same time an almost overpowering desire to stretch her black-clad self before these young men. "If I'm not in Chicago this morning I might just as well be in a hospital or a grave."

At her suggestion the rescuing party backed away for a few minutes while she put on the few clothes that women wear nowadays. Later they met her outside.

Yes, she would have one of Cass's cigarets. It would take the place of coffee and grapefruit.

"We've formed ourselves into a committee," George told her, "a committee for the purpose of getting you to Chicago on time, since that seems to be of considerable importance in your young life."

"And before we go any further," suggested Cass, "it seems that you ought to know who we are so you can decide whether you care to trust yourself to our tender mercies for a few hours. I've got a card somewhere." He reached into the pocket of his coat and took out a case from which he handed her an engraved card.

Helga held it up to the light to read. "Mr. George V. Cottrell."

"Wait a minute," Cass interrupted. "That's the wrong—ouch! What the deuce are you kicking me in the shins for?"

"Pardon me. My foot slipped." And then *salto voce* George ordered, "Let the mistake ride."

"Of course I know who you are, Mr. Cottrell," Helga was saying. "Everyone does."

"See! That's what I told you last night," George confirmed gloomily. "There's no use trying to get away from that name."

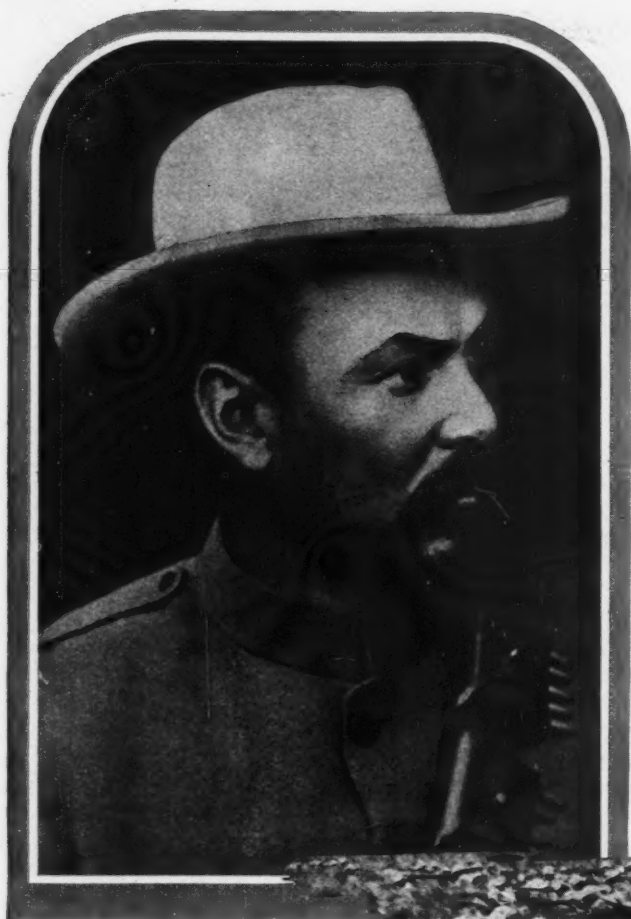
"And who are you?" Helga demanded. "I suppose you are Charles Schwab or—"

"No, I'm just plain Cass Hoover, without a cent, not related to anybody—merely a friend of Mr. Cottrell's, a sort of a satellite or pet poodle, I believe he calls me."

"I never called you any such a thing. What I said was—"

"Gentlemen, I hate to interrupt what appears to be a serial argument between you but I must say good-bye and try to find some way of getting to Chicago."

"We forgot to tell you, didn't we," George replied, "but that's all arranged for. While you (Continued on page 108)



General Louis Botha at the time of the Boer War.

A Trapped Armored Train

the army assigned to the defence of the colony was blockaded in Ladysmith. A single battalion of Dublin Fusiliers, two or three guns, a few squadrons of Natal Carbineers, two companies of Durban Light Infantry and an armored train, were all the forces that remained at liberty outside Ladysmith.

Reinforcements were hurrying to the spot from all parts of the British Empire and a whole army corps was coming from England; but during the days I was at Estcourt our weakness was such that we expected ourselves to be surrounded at any moment and could do little but fortify our post and wear a confident air. Cavalry reconnaissances were pushed out every day ten or fifteen miles towards the enemy to give us timely notice of their expected advance; and in an unlucky moment it occurred to the General in temporary command on the spot to send his armored train along the sixteen miles of intact railway line to supplement the efforts of the cavalry.

Nothing looks more impressive and formidable than an armored train, but nothing is in

FEW men that I have met have interested me more than General Louis Botha. An acquaintance formed in violent circumstances ripened into a friendship which I greatly valued. I saw in this grand, rugged figure the father of his country, the wise and profound statesman, the farmer-warrior, the crafty hunter of the wilderness, the deep, big, sure man of the solitudes.

My relations with him were varied and extraordinary and our introduction almost unbelievable. In 1906 when, as newly elected first Prime Minister of the Transvaal, he came to London to attend the Imperial Conference, a banquet was given to the Dominion Prime Ministers in Westminster Hall. I was Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. As the Boer Leader, so recently our enemy and the cynosure of all eyes, passed up the hall to his place, he paused to say to my mother who stood by my side: "He and I have been out in all weathers." It was surely true.

When the Boer War had begun seven years before I hurried out to South Africa as the war correspondent of the "Morning Post." Intent upon getting into Ladysmith before it was surrounded and besieged, I traveled swiftly by the railways of the Cape Colony on one of the last trains before the line was cut. I voyaged through a hideous gale in a tiny steamer from East London to Durban. I speeded up the line from Durban to Ladysmith only to find it cut near the Tugela River by the advancing Boers. I was too late; the door was shut in my face. The siege of Ladysmith had begun.

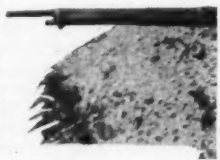
There was nothing to do but to wait at Estcourt, about twenty-five miles south of the Tugela River, with such handfuls of troops as were being hurriedly collected to protect the southern part of Natal from the impending Boer invasion. Nearly all

fact more vulnerable and helpless. It is only necessary to blow up a bridge or culvert and the poor monster is stranded far from home and help at the mercy of the enemy. This consideration does not seem to have occurred to our commander. He decided to put a company of the Dublin Fusiliers and a company of the Durban Light Infantry into the armored trucks, to add a small six pounder naval gun with some sailors landed from "H. M. S. Terrible," together with a break-down gang of plate-layers, and to send this considerable portion of his forces upon a reconnaissance "into the blue."

The officer he selected for the duty of commanding this operation was my friend, Captain Haldane.

Captain Haldane told me on the night of November fourteenth of the task which had been set him for the next day. He did not conceal his misgivings on the imprudence of the enterprise, but he was of course, like everyone else at the beginning of a war, very keen upon adventure and a brush with the enemy. Would I come with him? He would like it if I did! Out of comradeship, and because I thought it was my duty to gather as much information as I could, I accepted.

The military events which followed



By
The Rt. Hon.
WINSTON
S.
CHURCHILL

are well known and have often been described. The armored train proceeded about fifteen miles towards the enemy and got as far as Chiveley station without a sign of opposition or indeed of life or movement on the vast undulations of the Natal landscape. We stopped for a few moments at Chiveley to report our arrival at this point by telegraph to the General. No sooner had we done this than we saw behind us, on a hill between us and home which overlooked the line at about five hundred yards distance, a number of small figures hurrying forward.

Certainly they were the enemy. Certainly they were behind us. What were they doing with the railway line? There was not an instant to lose. We started immediately on our return journey.

As we approached the hill the silence of the countryside was broken by rifle and cannon fire. I was standing on a box with my head and shoulders above the steel plating of the rear armored truck. I saw thirty or forty Boers and a field gun on the crest of the hill. The shell of this gun burst; it seemed only a few feet above my head. It was shrapnel!

The railway line curved round the base of the hill on a steep down gradient and under the stimulus of the enemy's fire, as well as of the slope, our pace increased. The Boers had only time for one shot from their gun before we were round the corner out of their sight. It flashed across my mind that there must be some trap farther on. I was just turning to Haldane to suggest that someone should scramble along the train and make the engine driver reduce speed when suddenly there was a tremendous crash, and he and I and all the soldiers in the truck were pitched head over heels on to its floor. The armored train traveling at not less than forty miles an hour had been thrown off the metals by some obstruction or by some injury to the line. The first three vehicles were all derailed; the engine remained on the line and so did the three trucks remaining, in one of which we were.

In our truck no one was seriously hurt and it took but a few seconds for me to scramble to my feet and look over the top of the armor. The train lay in a valley about a thousand yards



Winston S. Churchill as a war correspondent during the Boer War.

on the other side of the enemy's hill. On the top of this hill were scores of figures running forward, throwing themselves down in the grass; and from it there came almost immediately an accurate and heavy rifle fire.

I got down from my perch, and Haldane and I debated what to do. It was agreed that he, with the little naval gun and his Dublin Fusiliers in the rear truck, should endeavor to keep down the enemy's firing and that I should go and see what had happened to the train, what was the damage to the line and whether there was any chance of repairing it.

I nipped out of the truck accordingly and ran along the line to the head of the train. The engine, as I have said, was still on the rails; the first truck, an ordinary bogey, had turned completely head over heels, killing or terribly injuring some of the plate-layers who were upon it. It lay completely clear of the track. The two next armored trucks, which contained the Durban Light Infantry, were



British troops stealing up on the enemy at Orange River, South Africa.

A Trapped Armored Train

both derailed, one still upright and the other on its side. They lay jammed against each other in a V-shaped position quite blocking the homeward path of the rest. Behind the overturned trucks the Durban men, bruised, shaken and some severely injured, had found a temporary shelter. The enemy's fire was continuous and soon there mingled with the rifles the bang of the field gun and the near explosion of its shell. We were caught in the toils.

The line appeared to be uninjured; no rail had been removed. I formed the opinion that it would be possible to use the engine as a ram to butt and push the two wrecked trucks clear of the line and thereby open up a way of escape for the whole force. I returned along the train to Captain Haldane's truck, and told him through a loophole what was the position and what I proposed we should do. He agreed to all I said and undertook to keep the enemy hotly engaged meanwhile.

I was very lucky in the hour that followed not to be hit. It was necessary for me to be almost continuously moving up and down the train in the open, telling the engine driver what to do. This man, a civilian, wounded in the head by a shell splinter and distracted with pain, would obey my orders and no one else's. We uncoupled his engine from the rear trucks, and he proceeded to make short runs at the wreckage, pushing it each time a little clearer of the track. At first we made good progress, but gradually the wreckage got more tightly jammed together and the steel angle of one of the derailed trucks stuck obstinately a fatal six inches across the track.

The hope and excitement of the work was such as to absorb me completely. I remember, however, thinking that it was just like working in front of an iron target at a rifle range at which a squad of men were firing continually. Above all things we had to be careful not to throw the engine off the line. But at last, as the artillery firing steadily increased and another gun came into action, I decided to take a great risk. The engine was backed and driven full tilt at the obstruction. There was a harsh crunching tear, the engine reeled on the rails and as the obstructing truck reared upwards, ground its way past on to the homeward side, free and, as it turned out, safe. But our three remaining trucks were fifty yards away, still on the wrong side of the obstruction that had derailed the train and had fallen back into its original position.

What were we to do? Certainly we could not go back. Could we then drag the trucks by hand up to the engine? They were narrower than the engine and there would just be room for them to slip past. I went back again to Captain Haldane. He ordered his men to climb out of their steel pen and try to push it up towards the engine. The plan was sound enough, but it broke down under the force of circumstances. The truck was so heavy that it required all hands to move it. The fire was so hot and the increasing confusion so great that the men drifted away from the exposed side.

The enemy, relieved of our counter-fire, were now plainly visible in large numbers on the face of the hill, firing furiously. We then agreed that the engine should go slowly back along the line with all the wounded, who were now numerous, and that the Dublin and the Durban men should retreat on foot, sheltering themselves as much as possible behind the engine which would go at a foot's pace. Upwards of fifty persons were crowded on the engine and its tender, of whom the greater part were streaming with blood, and we began to move slowly forward.

I was in the cab of the engine directing the engine driver. It was crammed so full of wounded men that one could scarcely move. The shells burst all around, some striking the engine, others dashing the gravel of the track upon it and its unhappy human freight. The pace increased; the Infantry outside began to double, to struggle and then to be left behind. When at last I got the engine driver to stop altogether, we were already three hundred yards away from our Infantry. Close at hand was the bridge across the Blue Krantz River, a considerable span. I told the engine driver to cross the bridge and wait on the other side. Forcing my way out of the cab I got down on to the line and went back along it to find Captain Haldane, to bring him and his Dublin Fusiliers along.

But while these events had been taking place everything else had been in movement. I had not retraced my steps one hundred yards, when, instead of Haldane and his Company, two dark figures in plain clothes, with slouched hats, sprang up and leveled their rifles at me. I turned again and ran back towards the now distant engine. The two Boers fired again and again as I ran between the metals. They were not one hundred yards away when I started and their bullets seemed to miss only by inches. We were in a small cutting with banks about six feet high on

either side, and there was absolutely no cover. I determined to get out of this blasted corridor. I darted to the left, scrambled up the bank, got through a wire fence untouched, but so completely winded that I threw myself on the ground to get my breath. Fifty yards away was a small masonry plate-layer's cabin; there was cover there. About two hundred yards away was the rocky gorge of the Blue Krantz River; there was plenty of cover there. I rose, determined to dash for the river.

Suddenly on the other side of the railway, separated from me by the rails and two uncut wire fences, I saw a horseman galloping furiously—a tall, dark figure, holding his rifle in his right hand. He pulled up his horse almost in its own length and shouted a command. We were forty yards apart.

That morning I had taken with me—despite the fact that I was a war correspondent—my Mauser pistol. I thought I could kill this man and, after the treatment I had received, I earnestly desired to do so. I put my hand to my belt; the pistol was not there. When engaged in clearing the line and in getting in and out of the engine, I had taken it off! In about the time this takes to tell, the Boer horseman, still seated on his horse, had covered me with his rifle. The animal stood stock still, and so did I. I looked towards the river; I looked towards the plate-layer's hut. The Boer continued to look along his sights. I thought there was absolutely no chance of escape. If he fired, he would surely hit me, so I held up my hands and surrendered.

"When one is alone and unarmed," said the great Napoleon, in words which flowed through my mind in the poignant minutes that followed, "a surrender may be pardoned." Still he might have missed and the Blue Krantz ravine was very near and the two wire fences were still uncut. However, the deed was done. Thereupon my captor lowered his rifle and beckoned to me to come across to him. I obeyed. I climbed through the wire fences, crossed the line and stood by his side. He sprang off his horse and began firing in the direction of the bridge upon the retreating engine and a few straggling British figures. Then, when the last had disappeared he remounted, and at his side I tramped back towards the spot where I had left Captain Haldane and his Company. I saw none of them. They were already prisoners.

As I plodded through the sopping field by the side of my captor a disquieting and timely reflection came into my mind. I had two clips of Mauser pistol ammunition, each holding ten rounds, in two little specially made breast pockets one on each side of my khaki coat. These cartridges were the same as I used at Omdurman and were the only kind supplied for the Mauser pistol. They contained what are called "soft nosed bullets." I had never given them a thought until now. It was borne in upon me that they might be a very dangerous possession. I dropped the right hand clip on the ground without being seen. I had got the left hand clip in my hand and was about to drop it when my captor looked down sharply and said in English, "What have you got there?"

"What is it?" I said. "I picked it up."

He took it, looked at it and, to my relief, threw it away. We continued to plod on until we reached the main group of prisoners and found ourselves speedily in the midst of many hundreds of mounted Boers who streamed into view in long columns of twos and threes, many holding umbrellas over their heads in the pouring rain.

Such is the episode of the armored train and the story of my capture on November 15, 1899.

It was not until three years later when the Boer Generals visited England to ask for some loan or assistance on behalf of their devastated country that I was introduced at a private luncheon to their leader, General Botha. We talked of the war and I briefly told the story of my capture.

Botha listened in silence; then he said: "Don't you recognize me? I was that man. It was I who took you prisoner. I, myself." His bright eyes twinkled with pleasure.

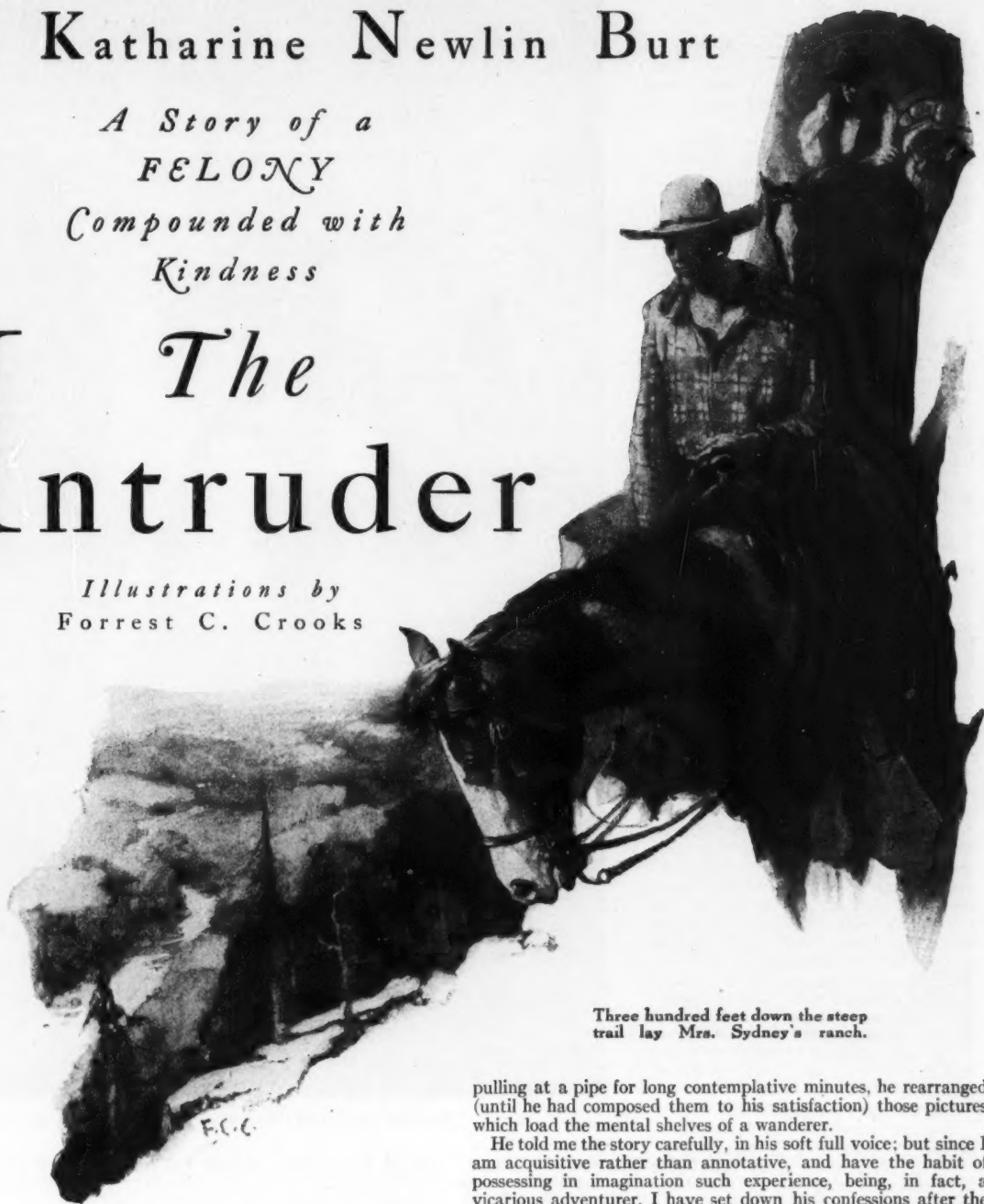
Botha in white shirt and frock coat looked very different in all save size and darkness of complexion from the wild war-time figure I had seen that rough day in Natal. But about the extraordinary fact there can be no doubt. He had entered upon the invasion of Natal as a simple burgher. His own disapproval of the war had excluded him from any high command at its outset. But in a month he was Commander-in-Chief of the Boer Armies. But on this occasion, as a private serving in the ranks, he had galloped on ahead of the whole Boer forces in the ardor of pursuit, and thus it was we first became acquainted.

By Katharine Newlin Burt

*A Story of a
FELONY
Compounded with
Kindness*

The Intruder

*Illustrations by
Forrest C. Crooks*



Three hundred feet down the steep trail lay Mrs. Sydney's ranch.

"I'VE always wanted to get a woman's judgment on what I did," said Rossiter, "so, if you'd care to hear the story?"

Rossiter's stories were usually worth listening to.

"It's a confession," he told me gravely, glancing up for an instant from the fire which burned generously there before us, tossing up red lights into his eyes and against the log walls behind him. The "young people" of the outfit, including a fifty year old foreman, had ridden twenty miles to a dance and Rossiter, being lame still from a recent fall, kept me company in the quiet ranch house.

"I was really guilty of bigamy," he began again with composure, then hastily amended, as he felt rather than saw my start, "oh, not for myself but for another person!"

"Vicarious bigamy?" I suggested, inventing a crime.

"That would be about it, I guess." He accepted my suggestion in all seriousness, even with a gesture of gratitude, and,

pulling at a pipe for long contemplative minutes, he rearranged (until he had composed them to his satisfaction) those pictures which load the mental shelves of a wanderer.

He told me the story carefully, in his soft full voice; but since I am acquisitive rather than annotative, and have the habit of possessing in imagination such experience, being, in fact, a vicarious adventurer, I have set down his confessions after the omniscient fashion of the tale-teller. Concerning my judgment I have added nothing. There can be, I fancy, but one opinion as to his guilt.

Rossiter reined in his horse and looked down from the narrow sliding trail he had been following all day, into the steep valley three hundred feet below him. The afternoon sun, a blazing Western sun of August, burned through the thin high air with an immediate heat that stung the skin while the lungs breathed freshness. The valley was a wedge of color: the bare purplish rocks of its sides, an intense ribbon of emerald where cottonwood and aspen grew along the rapid stream, fields of sultry golden harvest sloping up like the wings of a gorgeous green-bodied butterfly.

"Isn't that the ranch, Johnny?" Rossiter called—his companion's pony had come to a sympathetic halt—"the widow's, I mean, who'll let us camp by her water?"

Johnny swung a leg over his saddle horn and wrinkled up the burned lower lids of his eyes.

"Yes. That's the ranch. And I said she didn't hire no help but I see a feller mowin' in the hayfield. I figure Mrs. Sidney has been prosperin' some since my last visit."

Rossiter, after a moment's reconnoitering with eyes almost as keen as his guide's, made out the man; a slip of blue, he seemed, from their height, perched in a toy machine.

"How do we get down, Johnny?"

Johnny smiled slowly. "By goin'," he said and plunged down the trail. Rossiter with tightened lips followed the breakneck lead. The ponies braced their backs, squatted, dug in their firm feet, made unwilling choice of precarious footholds in the sharp edged stones. The single packhorse pulled on Johnny's taut rope. Rossiter straightened back in his saddle. Five minutes later they were down among the aspens on a shadowed trail.

"This here's a good spot for camp," said Johnny, "handy water, and we can turn the horses into Mrs. Sydney's pasture if she'll let us."

"I'll go ask her." Rossiter was glad of the excuse to avoid the routine of making camp.

He let down the bars he came to presently, remounted and trotted along a lane at the end of which stood a low log house of two rooms, with a lean-to. It was a neat house in good repair; fresh white curtains bellied from the windows and a bodyguard of geraniums and sunflowers flanked the walls. No one answered his knock and he walked over to the field that held the mower. At his call the blue figure climbed down and came to meet Rossiter, who, as the slim youth in shirt and overalls drew near, saw that it was a woman. She was spare and springy and moved with swift directness, but her walk was a woman's walk, and when she took off her farmer's hat to wipe her brow she disclosed an abundance of dense black hair, brushed straight from her forehead into a ponderous knot. Her face was burned dark so that the teeth and eyeballs had a negroid whiteness, and the hazel irises themselves looked pale as amber.

She came straight to Rossiter, looked him in the eyes with a grave level look and spoke bruskiy and softly.

"What do you want with me?"

Rossiter commanded his slight discomposure. "Are you Mrs. Sydney, ma'am?"

"Yes," she answered, her lips closing resolutely on the word.

"I was wondering—my guide said that you might let us camp near your stream here and pasture our horses for the night in one of your fields—"

"Yes—the first field through the bars. Do you want any grub?"

"Well—yes, ma'am, we do." Rossiter's pleasant deprecatory manner did not move her to greater femininity. She was much like a hard worked ranchman, sobered by scantily rewarded toil. But she was young, not more than twenty-five.

She looked him over before she spoke again.

"Come and take supper with me," she said, "you and your guide. I'll have it ready in about an hour." She went over to her team and Rossiter stammered his thanks to a retreating back.

As she picked up her reins she turned and smiled with no coquetry whatever, no invitation, no faintest gleam of sex—the smile of a patient boy, an overworked smile. Rossiter ached at the sight of it.

He returned to Johnny with the invitation, but Johnny chose to mind camp.

"I don't cotton to that widow lady," he said. "She's common



Rossiter had caught the revolver and leaped in through the window.

enough and pleasant enough, but she's had a hard row to hoe and she's kind of dangerous, fierce-like. No, sir, you go eat grub with her and make my excuses."

Rossiter went, not unwilling to keep his hostess to himself.

It was now dusk, sweet with hay; a light shone like amethyst in Mrs. Sydney's window. Her smile of patient youth drew Rossiter. He found her in her kitchen, no longer in her man's overalls but in a very clean white shirt and skirt. This kitchen was evidently her living-room; her round table was set for three, a lamp was lighted. Everything was plain, well cared for, sweetly clean.

"It's hot in here where I've been cooking," she said, and from her speech he decided that she must once have been a "school-marm" but had lost the precision without forgetting the correctness. "If you'll lend me a hand I'll carry the table out to the back porch. It's screened from the mosquitoes and it's cool. There's still just about enough light to eat by. The eggs are cooked and I've got salad and coffee. Sorry your guide wouldn't come."

They sat in the canyon stillness, the lightly attached aspen leaves about the house hardly quivering; the water ran close to the porch and made a pleasant talk of its own, mysteriously



Like a flash Marcia was by his side. "I want you to meet an old neighbor—and an old enemy—of mine," she said.

releasing Rossiter from self-consciousness, as music will release reserve in a dim room. His hostess had no slightest trace of shyness. She asked him a few questions. He told her his business, prospecting for oil in the interest of a company back in the East. This detour into Deep River was a side venture of which, he told her, everyone disapproved, but, of course, if he made a fortune everyone would forget the disapproval. He'd gambled in an oil possibility not far from her country. "All this formation"—he waved his hands towards the mountain-side—"means oil, you know, Mrs. Sydney. You may strike it rich one of these days."

Supper was over and they sat at ease, he with his arms on the table, looking at her, not very clearly visible save for her flashing teeth and the intent, unusual brightness of her eyes. He was searching his mind for courage to question her, for by now his curiosity was alert. She was a woman of he knew not what possibilities of fascination. Her soft brusqueness of speech, her ironical flash of smile—she was, he found, by no means boyish or gentle in her patience—her slow, sure movements speaking of steely strength, her direct looks, combined to make upon him an impression forceful and faintly sinister. She held his attention like a suspenseful tale.

The ironical smile gleamed as she listened to his prophecy. "If I struck it rich," she said, "it would be the only thing I ever in my life got easily. You can't get me stirred up with talk about oil—or gold at the foot of the rainbow—not me, Mr. Rossiter!"

"Well, if anyone comes prospecting around here or if you get offers for your ranch—big business often takes advantage of a woman, especially a widow like yourself—hold out for a real price. If your husband was alive—"

"I'm not rightly a widow," she said evenly, not looking at him but at her long, roughened fingers. "My husband went off six years ago and never came back. I think he thought he'd made a mistake—tired of loneliness—and me."

She drew no deeper breath, spoke only soberly. He could not detect a grain of bitterness.

"Six years ago?"

"I've worked the homestead ever since."

"Alone?"

"Not always—quite. I've been able to get some help."

"Wonderful!"

She seemed startled by his fervent exclamation. "As a matter of fact there is a mortgage on my ranch so—"

But he couldn't be so quickly diverted from his astonished admiration. "I never heard of such a thing," he broke in, still absorbed in the miracle of her achievement. "You must be made of—what mustn't you be made of! You have never heard anything of your husband? It's incredible that he should have meant to leave you—to desert you utterly like that!"

"Not incredible—such things have happened. It's not even very strange if you know the story. He was an Eastern college man—a mere boy. He'd been sent out here by way of discipline. The marriage on his part was a passionate blunder. He was—I suppose—a gentleman."

She stood up with catlike grace and listened.

"Just a moment. Someone is coming." She added to herself: "I thought so! It's Nick Harvey." She moved a step across the porch as though she meant to go in, then: "Mr. Rossiter," she said in a vague fashion, not looking at him, "I must ask you to come in if I call. I'm afraid I invited you tonight for an especial reason. I have a visitor and—I'm frightened. Your presence—I'll tell him of it if it's necessary—ought to be enough, but if I need help—"

He stood up with quickly contracted nerves. "Be sure to call," he answered instinctively, and she bent her head a little and walked into the house.

Rossiter did not return to his seat; he stood with his back against the log post of the porch and felt that his hands were tingling. His thoughts too seemed to tingle, to move rapidly as though driven about in circles by a small whip. He felt rather amusedly angry with Mrs. Sydney. She had been quick to take advantage of his unexpected advent. His vanity was a trifle put about, for, though he hadn't realized it, her invitation had faintly flattered him. But it was after all no tribute to his good looks or to his ingratiating young address, but a frank tribute to his fists. And she had been disappointed at the absence of his guide.

Inside a man's voice was speaking—a slow, edged voice, deep and hard. It suggested a heavy and powerful speaker. Rossiter felt himself justified in espionage and moved softly from the porch across the turf clover to an open window.

Facing him sat Mrs. Sydney, her hands caught about her knee in its white skirt; she was looking up at her visitor, and there stood a faint sharp line between her brows. Her eyes glistened like a leopard's in the lamplight. Her lips were level, firmly laid.

The man straddled across the middle of the room, a mass of a man in shapeless corduroys, ponderous boots, with hair rough and dark, a lean, strong head. He took a step this way and that, and Rossiter caught half glimpses of his face, lowering, blunt-featured. When the man, however, turned quite about, a moment later, to lower the lamp wick which smoked, the light beat up into a knotted, sun and wind burned, not ignoble face, all rough and blunt but doggedly intelligent, and bitter with a bitterness never shown by brutes. He was speaking as he lowered the wick. Rossiter heard him plainly.

"You've played a long hand with me, Marcia," he said, "but I can show you winning cards. You're about through fighting, aren't you? Come now—be honest with me!"

There was a hint of suppressed pleading in his tone, as though he cherished a rather desperate and fearful hope.

Her body had a crumpled look as she leaned back. But she shook her head.

"No? Not through yet?" He had turned his back to the window again and, looking her over, laughed. "Still packin' a gun for me, girl?"

Again she nodded, keeping her eyes up, but she moistened her lips. The man laughed again with a queer catching breath.

"Missed your gun lately, haven't you? Well, ma'am, here it is." He put back his hand and pulled out of his hip pocket a small automatic. Rossiter jerked. He wished with a spasm of regret that he'd brought his own gun. Fists wouldn't be of much use now. He watched through narrowed lids. The woman was certainly very pale. Her dark sun-brown was gray.

The man's great right hand had closed firmly on the gun and he held it, resting his elbow behind him on the table edge; this position threw his big body back a little and so enabled Rossiter to watch his profile. The eyes were bent down on the gun and along the strong lips lay a pressure of weary bitterness. He struck his left hand lightly and repeatedly against the weapon. He seemed almost to be speaking to it rather than to the pale listening woman.

"For six years I've served you like a dog," he said, "and for six years you've been thinkin' me in your heart—a wolf. Whilst I worked fer you on your ranch, whilst I kept dumb and held myself from you, respectin' your foolish womanish scruples, you

have been packin' a gun against me." He paused as though something had attacked his breath. Rossiter could see the brief struggle in his throat. "Findin' that gun on you—seein' the handle of it in your pocket, has about made me, I reckon, what you thought I was. I hev been settin' up there in my cabin three nights long, sence I took this thing from you—starin' at that little weapon of yours. I'd rather be shot through the heart, Marcia, then live through them nights again. After six years—of—lovin'." The word was powerful on his shaken breath. "I am not naturally a patient man, but you hev learned me how to wait. Once you was a schoolmarm. Well, you set me a long, hard lesson. I've learned it down page by page, word by word, letter by letter. Six years ago that Sydney feller came upon us, that August day down there in the meadow—you with your back against a stack, your scared eyes misreadin' me just as, I see now, you have always been misreadin' me—whilst I tried to tell you how I felt. Oh, I know I am a dumb dog! But I'm talkin' now. Sydney came and knocked me down, struck me in the face. He read me at your value—naturally. Don't you savvy why I couldn't thrash the gentleman? Because I saw your eyes change. They changed from fear for yourself into fear for him. You put out your hands."

He paused. The woman's face—paler perhaps—stood fixed against the wall as though it had been painted there. Harvey's big fingers trembled and clenched about the gun.

"So you hev nothin' to say. Not a word . . . Who's proved the better man of us two—him or me? You ain't still hankerin' after a feller that quit you cold, Marcia . . . You're too proud for that. What's standin' in your mind against me? I thought it was because you feared he might come back. I thought it was because, in your little cold, scared soul, you was afraid of him and of—God. But I was wrong. You was just afraid of what hurt my—my love might do you. Findin' your gun has learned me that. Well, ma'am, here ends the lesson I've been learned so good . . . One lesson in a life . . ."

He moved, for a big man, so quickly that he was at the window before Rossiter could leap back. At the same instant Marcia gave a faint, uncertain cry. Harvey had lifted his hand but before the revolver in it could fly out on its way to the river, Rossiter caught it and leaped in through the open window. Like magic, Marcia was at his side.

"I have a visitor tonight," she said, as casual a pleasant hostess as could well be fancied. "Mr. Rossiter, I want you to meet Mr. Harvey, an old neighbor and"—with a quick little artificial laugh—"an old enemy of mine."

Rossiter dropped the automatic into his pocket and bowed. Harvey slowly moved away from the wall against which he had flattened himself dangerously and—grinned.

"Please to meet you, Mr. Rossiter," he said in a soft sing-song. And the three of them sat down for conversation.

It was hot in the room, sweat streamed down Harvey's face, there were tiny beads on Mrs. Sydney's brow, Rossiter felt that his back was clammy and chill and his shirt clung. The mosquitoes zuzzed, a big moth knocked about the lamp. Their talk was of hunting, of ranching, of mining experience, of stock. At eleven o'clock, beaten out in a high shaky treble by the Mission clock, Harvey rose. He had an exhausted look.

"I'll wish you a—good-by, Marcia."

Rossiter, on whose young nerves his towering body and harsh face made an oppression, stood with his hand in his pocket. He understood the woman's long and secret fear.

"And you sir, a good night."

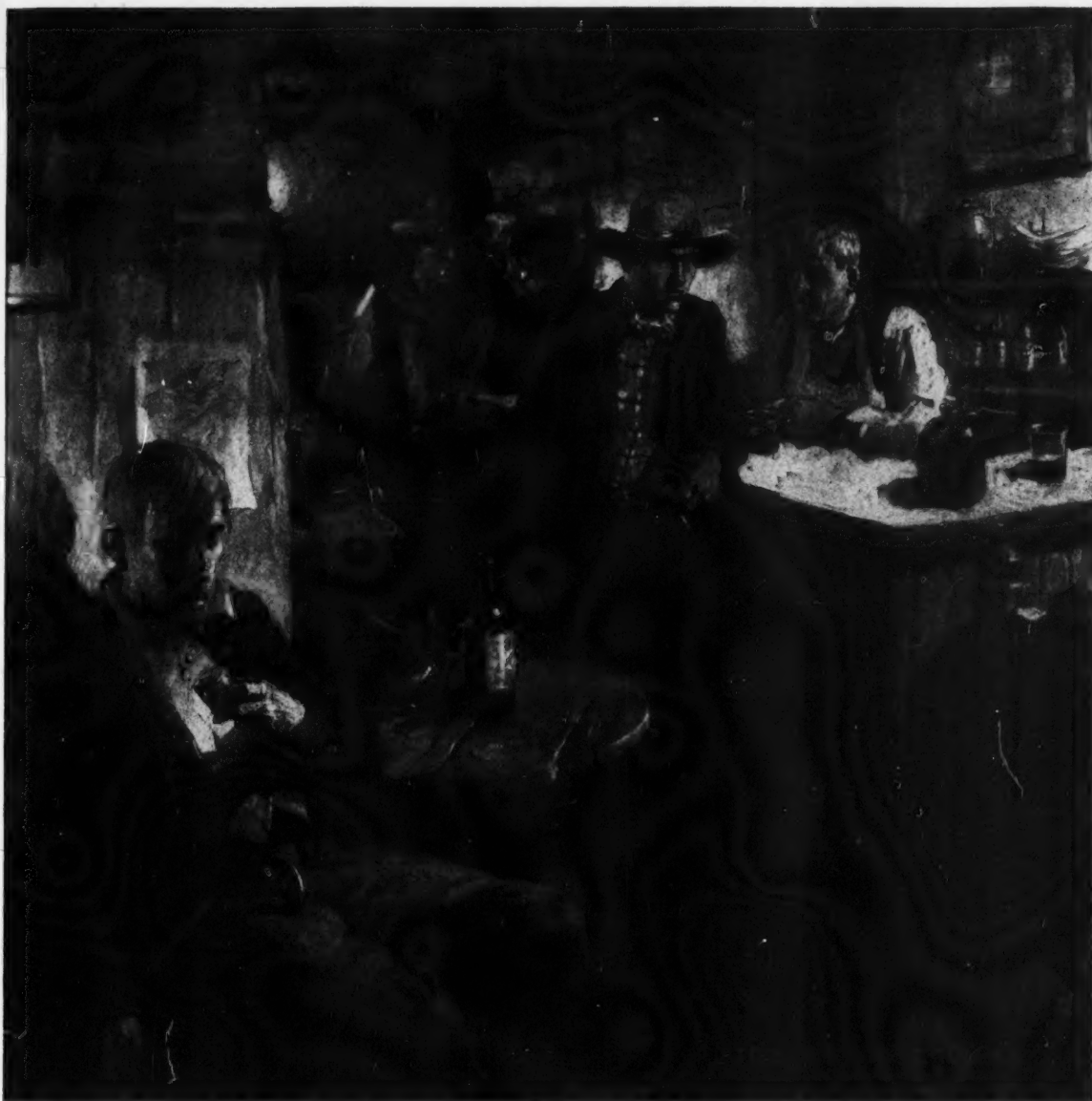
Harvey's look, somber and level, turned slowly from the young man's scarlet face to Marcia's. "When you found out your gun was gone," he said slowly, "you hired a watchdog against me. Good-by. You've no more call to fear—and hate—me . . . I'm through."

He went out, his steps shaking the room, and they heard him mount his horse and ride away.

Rossiter, who had been staring after the man, had a sudden feeling that another presence had come behind him into the room, so that he looked almost sharply back. Marcia stood a step nearer to the door; her dilated eyes were listening, her whole face followed . . . An intense beauty possessed her. Her patient irony, her faintly sinister personality were transfigured into a sudden desolate sweetness. All this in a flash—too brief for any comprehension, any interpretation. The astral nimbus, which seemed to have come about her without any consciousness of hers, flickered away.

"Are you—safe now?" asked Rossiter softly and uncertainly, and returned her gun.

She held the little pistol in her hands, turning it about, looking



"Doc gives him six months more," said the barkeeper. "Doc says he's dyin'. I say he's dead."

down in silence at the polished, gleaming steel of the weapon. "Are you still afraid of him?" For the life of him Rossiter could not keep the slight drawl from his voice.

Her eyes leaped up, distended and alarming.

"You stood by the window," she accused him, "you heard that tale of—unrewarded service, of—persecuted love—and, man-like, you believed it." She was trembling from head to foot, her lips were white, she had clenched her hands so that her knuckles were pale spots on the tan. "Do you think if it had been the truth he'd have kept silent about it all these years? Do you think he wouldn't have made me *know* the nature of his love? I tell you, that man has hung over my life. It's been like living under the shadow of a sliding mountain." She shook uncontrollably and breathed fast. "I've feared, I've hated him. Yes. Yes. I've hated him. Have you ever lived in the fever of a hatred for six years?"

"Was it the little gun, then," he asked incredulously, "that has kept you safe?"

She moved away and stood near her empty fireplace, the phosphorescent amber eyes flashing defiance at him as though he were a relentless persecutor. She looked as if she had been driven back there, unwilling, step by step.

"No," she said slowly, "the only thing that has kept me safe has been—has been—his fear of my husband, who may at any hour of the day or night come back. That has kept me safe. John's return would mean—murder for one or the other of them,

and wolf as he is, that man in the bottom of his soul does shrink from that."

She spoke in a breathless monotone; the very stress of her feeling made her analysis incredible, unconvincing. It was an argument of hatred. She did not believe it herself, had lashed her mind into conviction. He had a feeling that she was given to such obstinate self-discipline.

Rossiter stared at her and cudged his wits.

"So you will—never—marry him?" he blundered presently.

She came toward him at that, as white as chalk.

"Do you call me a free woman?" she demanded and caught her breath. "Am I free to marry—or to love? I'm free only to hate," and she sat down abruptly, passing her hand over her forehead. "How hot it is!" she said in a changed voice. "I'm tired."

He paced about, stopped near her and looked down, worried and perplexed.

"I must leave you now. I hope you are really—safe," he said doubtfully.

She turned in her chair and with a strange childlike gesture laid both her hands on his arm and tightened them there until her fingers hurt.

"He said—good-by. Didn't you hear him? I don't think he will come back. If he does—not even you—could save me from him, Mr. Rossiter. Perhaps—still—the thought of my husband and"—she half laughed—"for all I (Continued on page 138)



"Alice," said Elsie. "Say something nice to

And They Lived Happily

A Novel of Married People's Morals

The Story So Far:

MORT CRANE was hurt and bewildered. Nothing serious had happened between him and his wife, Alice, and yet her petty and bitter criticisms of his social and business shortcomings were weighted with malice and they rankled in his mind. Their seventeenth wedding anniversary had not brought happiness; it had increased a growing discontent.

"If you had a little more pep yourself," Alice had said, "we could have a lot of things that I for one would be mighty glad to have." This was beginning to be a familiar complaint with Alice. Her social ambitions for herself and her daughter, Freida, were not being realized. She carped about the unpretentiousness of their home on the outskirts of the city; she insisted that Mort should have made a greater success with the Spencer Press, in which he owned a fourth interest, purchased, as she never

permitted her husband to forget, with her own money.

The Cranes had celebrated their wedding anniversary with a bridge party. Mort, who did not like social affairs, would surely have been bored if he had not met Helen Weston. She was the wife of Joe Weston, a prosperous bond broker. Unlike her rather boisterous husband, she possessed a dignity and serenity which made her distinctly superior to Alice's other friends. This beautiful and charming woman chose to interest herself in Mort, and her easy, intelligent conversation cast a glamour over an evening which he would have found empty otherwise.

In the meantime Alice was glad to renew her friendship with Howard Spencer, an old friend of hers and Mort's whom she had seen rarely in recent years. A typical energetic business man, owner of three fourths of the Spencer Press, Howard sympathized with Alice in deploring Mort's lack of ambition. While Howard admired his partner's artistic judgment, he resented Mort's



Howard. I can't because Joe is so jealous."

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON

Ever After

Illustrations
by
John La Gatta

contentment with old methods and his preference for quality work rather than quantity production. Alice was pleased when Spencer invited her to lunch with him and talk over the business problems of the Press in which her money was invested.

For Alice the luncheon with Spencer was an exhilarating lark which she intended to keep secret from Mort. Spencer was gallant and flattering, and to prolong the adventure they decided to stop in at Elsie Avery's. The wife of Jim Avery, a successful politician, Mrs. Avery was a cheery forthright person, untroubled by serious scruples and fond of an occasional drink and dubious gaiety.

When Mrs. Avery had gone to mix her friends a drink, Howard asked Alice playfully: "How many Christmases ago was it that I kissed you under the mistletoe?" But further flirtatious skirmishes were interrupted by Mrs. Avery's reappearance with a tray of gin rickeys.

"HOWARD'S been behaving terribly! Don't ever leave me alone with him!" cried Alice as she straightened her hat. One might have thought that she wished Elsie to know she had been kissed.

"Don't you mind, little girl!" said Elsie, busy with the drinks. "If he tries to kiss you again I'll slap him!"

"I never touched the woman! I leave it to the pictures on the wall if I laid a hand on her!" declared Spencer in a tone designedly unconvincing.

Elsie's rickeys were highly praised as perfect specimens of the rickey-making art.

"And to think men *work*!" sighed Spencer. "This is the best time I've had for twenty years!"

"It's almost like the good old times," said Elsie. "Say, Howard, do you remember"—she overturned a glass in the joy of the recollection—"do you remember the party Joe had for the

bunch of his friends when they came up here from New Orleans?"

"Say! that was some party! Of course I remember it!"

Under the inspiration of a second rickey Elsie and Spencer began describing the function in short staccato sentences interrupting each other to supply details, and laughing boisterously at the revisualization of some particularly joyous feature of the function.

"You never saw Howard when he was going strong!" Elsie flung at Alice, who was lending a wondering though sympathetic ear to the dialogue and laughing shrilly, though she was getting only the most confused idea of the entertainment they were recounting. "That night—I never did know where that place was that Joe took us to—old Howard was beautifully lit and I thought I'd die when he and Joe tried to play leap-frog and kept falling over, and one of the girls—I never did see that girl afterward—she was as funny as a goat!—tried to turn cart wheels and knocked over a lamp—a table with an oil lamp on it—and nearly burned up the house. Oh, my! But that was a night! and Joe got tired of his party after a while and wanted to break it up but nobody would go home!"

"I didn't know Joe kicked up that way," Alice remarked with an innocence that evoked derisive laughter from Elsie and Howard.

"Well, we ought to have some more of those good times," he was saying.

"We must think up something good and pull a party for Alice," Elsie suggested.

"Let's do it soon," said Spencer. "The Arthur Reddings have gone abroad and I'm taking their house while they're away. I'm tired of the club and need a change and it's a cute little box—you know it—with a lot of trees and grass. I plan to do quite a bit of quiet entertaining!"

"But not too quiet!" exclaimed Elsie. "I'm getting rusty and I'd like to get in one more good party before I die!"

"With husbands excluded!" said Spencer looking at his watch. "Well, girls, I guess my car has stood in front of this house long enough. I must slide back to the works!"

When he had gone Elsie praised him as one of the best fellows in the world.

"I didn't know whether I ought to let him come in," said Alice dubiously. "But he said he knew you wouldn't care."

"Care! What's there to care about! I'm not for the old stuff that a married woman's got to be locked up at home and never speak to any man but her own husband. Nobody stands for that any more!"

As she walked home Alice pondered this. She was both alarmed and fascinated by Elsie's boldly announced philosophy of the married life. She had learned enough from Elsie and Spencer to support an assumption that Joseph B. Weston was not an impeccable character.

In her cogitations for several days Mrs. Weston came frequently into her mind. Mrs. Weston, whom she had so greatly admired, became far more interesting from the fact that her husband did, in the kindest phrase that could be applied in the matter, "play around" a bit. And there was Elsie who, beyond question, had "played around" with both Weston and Spencer. Having been brought up rather strictly, the idea that married men and women did "play around"—seek diversions beyond the restraints of the marital tie, was novel and not without its allurements. Alice was confronted by a traditional repugnance to such adventuring, but it opened up new and inviting vistas for the jaded spirit. On the whole it was rather pleasant to know that life might be viewed as the spring of a run-down clock that could be wound up and set running again under the proper inspiration.

CHAPTER V

HELEN WESTON walked briskly through a street lately cut in the development of a new addition. She moved with the unmistakable ease of one in the full enjoyment of bodily health to whom exercise is both necessity and pleasure. In her short brown skirt, plain cloth hat and linen waist with a sweater flung over her arm, one noting her a little way off would have thought her a young girl. Reaching a block in which the forest trees still stood, marred only by the sign boards of real estate dealers, she swung herself over the fence, found a path, and slackened her pace to prolong her enjoyment of the cool wood.

A jay, roused by her approach, made a flutter of blue before her; a robin somewhere uttered its plaintive note and she paused, lifting her head with a smile on her lips as she waited for a repeti-

tion of the mellow notes. Before emerging upon another street on the farther side of the block she sat down on a fallen tree plucking leaves of grass and drawing them idly through her fingers.

She glanced unhurriedly at her watch and resumed her walk, continuing on to Jefferson Avenue and her own house. Such a walk as this, without a companion, had become a part of the routine of her life. In winter and summer, ever since the care of the children made less exacting demands upon her, she had managed to find an hour or two once a week for just such an excursion. Other walks she might take with the children or a woman friend; but these taken alone were to satisfy some craving of her soul for freedom, a need to be alone with herself.

She had been mystified to find these hours of self-communion so essential to her peace. She had given up going to church chiefly because Weston lost interest and spent Sunday morning at his office or a club; but she sent the children to a Sunday school and in the evenings read to them stories of heroes and poems she had loved as a girl; and they gathered at the piano and sang hymns or old ballads and generally wound up with the newest popular songs.

Weston viewed his children with an increasing detachment, but he was proud of their intelligence and their good manners. He would say to visitors who praised them that Helen was wonderful with the children. In his growing absorption with business he was quite satisfied to let Helen pass upon all the children's demands and needs. When he first branched out for himself he had consulted her and often deferred to her wishes in business projects with a man's superstitious faith in woman's intuitions, but for the last five years he had rarely taken her into his confidence as to what he was doing. The necessity for explaining his plans was irksome, particularly when on several occasions she frankly advised against some scheme that struck her as hazardous.

She enjoyed good clothes and chose her raiment with taste; an appearance of freshness and finish was inseparable from her: she never trailed about the house in dressing wrappers; she was one of those women who even in the simplest house dress seem smartly turned out.

When she reached home she bathed and dressed and went down to join the children under the trees in the yard. A charming comradeship existed between them and their adoration was evident in all their ways with her.

"Father telephoned he'd be late; he said not to wait dinner for him, he'd come as soon as he could," said Joe Junior.

The regular dinner hour was half-past six, and they waited until seven and were at the table when Weston arrived looking hot and tired. The children stood until he was seated and resumed their talk. He seemed preoccupied, said little beyond replying to their direct questions—as to whether he had written as promised to order an Airedale pup and whether he had got the tickets for the vaudeville *matinée* and whether they were really going to northern Michigan in August. He replied satisfactorily or with teasing evasion to all their questions, until his wife, who had been quietly watching him, took up the talk, and carried it along herself with an occasional appeal to the children.

"We're not going anywhere tonight?" he asked abruptly.

"No; but we are going out to Tom's place tomorrow. He said it would have the general effect of a picnic."

"Are we going, too, mama?" the children demanded in chorus.

"Yes—all the family. Tom said to leave about three; that will give time for a swim before supper."

"Leave at three? I'm not sure I can get away," Weston frowned and shook his head impatiently as the maid offered the salad.

"I thought you liked the romaine," said Mrs. Weston. "It's unusually crisp."

He looked at her abstractedly, and again shook his head. While the others ate their salad he sat humped forward with his arms on the table, his hands playing nervously with a fork. The children, taught not to bother their father when he was tired, talked cheerily among themselves, encouraged by their mother, who having exhausted her stock of neighborhood and social news left Weston to his own meditations. The picnic at Uncle Tom's was an event to which the youngsters presently returned.

"Well, Tom's asking the Cranes—you children don't know them—they're great friends of his. And their daughter will be there. That's the party!"

"Who'd you say was going?" demanded Weston.

"The Morton Cranes, Joe—we were at their house, you remember—several months ago at a card party."

"Oh, yes," he assented. "He's in Howard Spencer's company."



"That's the answer to everything," she said. "Holding fast to youth. But it's not so easy."

"They're very pleasant people, I think," she went on. "People of nice tastes. I thought their house quite charming."

"Wasn't it at the Cranes we saw the Jim Averys?" Weston roused himself to ask. "Ever call on Mrs. Avery? It wouldn't be a bad idea to get acquainted. Jim's a good fellow—quite a power in politics. He's attorney for several big concerns and coming on. You might have 'em for dinner sometime."

"Yes, certainly, Joe," his wife replied. "We might have them with the Cranes—?"

"Well, I don't believe that's a good combination. It would count for more if you'd have somebody a little more important."

"Oh, must we think of that?" she asked with a little laugh. "Go on; suggest some important people."

While he was cogitating, she told the children they might have their dessert out of doors. The matter of choosing the right people to meet the Averys was settled while they had their coffee, the choice falling upon two couples she did not know very well.

"I don't like forcing people on you," he said magnanimously. "But I've got to make friends with these new people who are moving to town. They appreciate social attentions. Some of my best connections are with men we've entertained in our house. You know, Helen, you're a mighty big help to me. I'm proud to have the men I do business with know you. I don't mind telling you you're the handsomest woman in town!"

A smile formed about his lips as he took the cigar from his

"Your turn, Helen!" shouted Tom, who was conducting an impromptu diving contest.



mouth and gazed at her with a look of admiration that did not disguise his pride of proprietorship. He liked having her dress for dinner, and the pale rose gown she wore tonight was particularly becoming. When they went out on the veranda at the side of the house he put his feet on the rail and lighted a fresh cigar while she sought the children. He caught glimpses of them as they paced the walk, Helen's arm about the two little girls and the boy walking ahead. When they passed through the hedge to the sidewalk he lounged after them. He liked the idea of being the founder of a family. He looked up at the house with a gratified sense of its spaciousness—one of the handsomest homes on the boulevard—pointed out as Joe Weston's home—a mighty successful fellow . . .

In their upstairs sitting-room, after the children had gone to bed, he read the evening newspaper in his own special chair with a standing lamp at one elbow and a tabouret of smoker's materials at the other. Helen took up a book, dropping it in her lap when he read aloud or epitomized some article for her benefit. Some stocks he was carrying had dropped several points—a ruse, he explained, signifying that certain interests were trying to shake out the small investors. She manifested a proper degree of interest in his revelations. He yawned and asked if she wouldn't like to take a run in the car to get the fresh air, but she replied that she didn't care about it unless he did. He moved about the room restlessly for a time until she put down her book.

"Well, Joe! Anything exciting happened downtown today?"



"I'm no mermaid," she cried. But she described a perfect curve as she plunged.

"About the same old thing. Sold a bunch of bonds to a new customer—man down in the country. I've been after him for a couple of years. There's a lot of competition in the securities business."

"I think it's wonderful how you keep pushing ahead, Joe. You certainly have a right to feel proud of your success."

"Well," he replied with a shrug of his thick shoulders, "I'm trying to land us somewhere. It's nice to be comfortable—to have a decent place to live and be able to do the things you want to. I don't want my boy to go through what I did." He paused to reach for a match. "Don't you think I don't remember how you stood by me when the going was hard. I'm glad I never went into a trust company or took a partner. You know you thought I made a mistake in refusing some of those chances,

but I like being my own boss. I want my work to count for Joseph B. Weston."

"Yes, Joe. I can see now that you were right. It wasn't that I hadn't faith in you. You know I always had that."

"You certainly did," he replied with gruff heartiness. "And you may be sure I'm grateful for all the help you gave me."

He produced a brief-case and began turning over the contents. She lifted her book again, assuming that he would be engrossed for sometime; but he eyed her furtively as he opened and folded certain of the documents. Again he rose and took a turn about the room, noting her hand turn the leaves, marking the slight movement of her dark graceful head as she accommodated her gaze to the fresh pages.

And They Lived Happily Ever After

It was a warm night but she always looked so provokingly cool, and just now she was as serene as the moon whose light illuminated the yard below. He went to the window and contemplated the interminable lines of automobiles that rolled along the boulevard, a link with the world of life and action. The very peace of the room was disquieting. That figure with the dark head, relaxed into its long graceful lines, the daintily slipped feet crossed on a low stool, disturbed him, roused a hostile feeling in him. He hated himself for being afraid of her. She belonged to him, and he had built this home to house her in and he gave her the wherewithal to conduct it. It was ridiculous to be afraid of her. He mastered his irritation and went back to his chair, fumbled among the papers again, made a computation on the back of an envelope.

"Oh, Helen, may I bother you just a minute?"

She gave instant heed with a murmured, "Yes, Joe."

"I hate like thunder to worry you about my business, but I'd like your help in a little matter."

"Why, I'd be awfully sorry, Joe, if you didn't always tell me when there's anything I can help about. I'm afraid I'm not much use."

"Well, I always think a man oughtn't to bother his wife about business—that ought to be left downtown. Just now I'm making some turns where I need all the ready cash I can get together."

Launched upon his subject he was at ease again, crossed his legs; he took a fresh cigar and turned it unlighted in his fingers.

"You remember two years ago I gave you some bank stock—put it in your name? That was after I made the big clean-up on the Ripley-Riggs stock. That was my best year and I wanted to begin giving you something for your own. I've always held a man ought to do that to guard against accidents. Of course we don't expect any accident to happen, but it's just as well to be on the safe side. Your First National stock—one hundred shares—is worth forty-thousand dollars, now. I paid thirty-five for it and you've had the dividends—you understand?"

"Yes, they're in my savings account," she said, "waiting till you tell me how to invest the money."

"Yes; there's enough interest to buy some bonds—I'll attend to that in a day or two. But, about your bank shares, I wonder if you'll lend them to me for a little while till I get through with some deals I'm working on. I've always been short of capital and I've borrowed pretty close to my limit. Forty-thousand would be a big help to me right now, and I'll give you back double before the year is out. I guess that's a fair offer."

He chuckled and relighted his cigar.

"Of course, Joe. How do I do it—something to sign?"

He brought a pen and showed her where to endorse the certificate. He watched her hand as it moved swiftly along the line he indicated, then blew upon the signature to dry the ink.

"You understand about this? It's just a loan, I wouldn't have asked you if you weren't always such a brick. Makes me look like an Indian giver! But you can be dead sure I know what I'm doing, and you'll double your money. Meanwhile—here's a kiss for security!"

"Thank you, Joe," she said turning her head.

He kissed her on the cheek and then on the lips, his hand clasp the nape of her neck. She did not return his kiss. When he stepped away and was thrusting the papers into the case she lifted her hand to her neck, passed her fingers slowly across the spot he had touched as one might touch a wound.

"Joe," she began after a moment's silence. "Have you ever set a limit for yourself? I mean a stopping place? You work so hard and never really rest as you ought to. You can't mean to keep this up forever!"

"Oh, pshaw! I'm all right. I get a lot of fun out of my work. These fellows that have just got to lay off every few months to rest up make me tired!"

"But," she continued, her fingers playing with her blue crystal beads, "if you're doing it all for the children and me I think we'd rather have some of your time. And we don't need so much money. We could do with much less; we didn't really need this big house. I sometimes get a little homesick for our first years together, when we used to pinch and save."

"Say!—don't you like this house?" he blurted. "Don't you like having a limousine to ride in instead of standing on the corner waiting for the yellow street cars?"

He stared at her blankly. Though she had pleaded for a less showy establishment than the house he had built, he attributed this to timidity due to the stringent times of their early married life. In his own phrase he didn't always "get" Helen. There were times when she puzzled him. She was not stupid; she read; she had very sensible views on many questions. Often her ability

to talk on world affairs with men he took to the house gave him a thrill of pride. But he was obliged to confess to himself that he didn't always understand her. He was worried by her lack of appreciation of the comforts he gave her. Perhaps his request for the bank stock had roused doubts in her mind as to his solvency. The idea that she might question his infallibility wounded his vanity and he assumed an injured air.

"Yes; I like it all, Joe," she replied soberly. "There isn't a thing on earth I could ask. You've given us everything. I don't want to vex you and I wouldn't have you think me ungrateful. But I can't help wondering sometimes whether—whether—we may not be losing something we used to have."

"Losing!" He repeated the word explosively, glaring at her. "What are we losing?"

"The happiness we used to have—the pleasures we enjoyed the more because we had to wait for them. I just wonder sometimes whether we ought to have so much when so many people have so little."

"Oh, hell!" he ejaculated scornfully. "You've been reading some fool book. You're talking socialism—that's what it all comes to!" And then planting himself before her he demanded: "Do you mean to say that you'd rather give this up and live in a duplex the way we used to than have this house on the boulevard with servants to wait on you? Do you think the children would be tickled to live on a side street and be nobody?"

"You've got clear away from the point, Joe. I enjoy luxury as much as anyone but I'm thinking of you. The years go so fast; we're getting on! And I sometimes wonder whether at the hard pace you go you do justice to yourself—really have time to live."

"Live!" he shot back the word. "For God's sake, Helen, what's got into you! What are you trying to do—preach to me! I tell you these times we got to keep stepping or we'll get trampled under foot! Competition in my line is something fierce. If you're thinking about religion I've got respect for all churches and I guess we give away as much to charity as anybody—more in proportion to our income than men worth twenty times as much as I am. And they're always sticking me on some committee to raise money for some fool thing. God knows you do enough charity work. I don't see where anybody can complain of us! You talk about life—ain't we happy? Don't you go everywhere you want to? Ain't I generous with you and the kids?"

"Yes—to all your questions, Joe!" she laughed and dismissed the discussion with a wave of the hand. In her laugh there was a tinge of irony too obscure for his perception. He adjusted the strap on the brief-case and stood holding it under his arm, eyeing her stolidly. What did she mean by life? The question left him groping. He had a man's tolerance for a woman's instinctive religiousness, but Helen had never impressed him as being a religious woman. When they were first married and still went to church it was her habit to kneel and say a prayer every night, but that was a long time ago. If she didn't mean God and prayers and things like that what on earth did she mean? Life! He guessed he had a tight hold on his life! He opened a cupboard and took out a bottle of brandy and poured himself a drink.

"Got to get an early start in the morning. Guess I'll go to bed," he said.

"I'm sleepy too," she replied. "Run along, Joe. I'll attend to the lights."

Sleep proved to be elusive and for a long time she stared into the darkness hearing his snore run its irregular gamut from a faint purr to a raucous snort as he lay on his back in the bed opposite. A breeze playing upon the window curtains fitfully admitted a ray of moonlight that fell across his face touching grotesquely the half-open mouth and the crease of fat under his chin. Only an arm's length away, yet he seemed separated from her by a vast abyss. It had not always been so—not in those early days when they had happily and resolutely joined hands to face the world together.

He had been thought handsome as a young man and she began to speculate as to just when she had begun to miss the charm he had had for her and to dread his caresses. The change had not been purely physical; the cause lay deeper. By slow processes his nature had coarsened. Little things, as the years passed, had shocked and disappointed her. Once, unobserved, she had seen him strike the youngest child in a fit of anger. She had never mentioned it, but the act had left its indelible mark in her heart. Once he had lied to her about an absence from home. Many times thereafter she had doubted the explanations he offered of his absences, but she was at pains to conceal her suspicions.

More and more she had withdrawn into herself, fashioning by

degrees a wall of reticence behind which she preserved her own spirit and lived her real life in happy isolation. She studied her aspirations, was her own confessor, imposed penances, sought to keep herself strong that her spirit might not be handicapped by a weak body.

At midnight she found the electric flash she kept by her bed and crept softly into the children's rooms. In the nearer slept the little girls; the boy in the room adjoining. She threw the beam of the lamp upon them, then stood by the door of young Joe's room till the air from the wide-open windows caused her to shiver.

With a sigh she crept back to bed and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER VI

MORT CRANE thought frequently of Mrs. Weston after his wedding anniversary party. She was too vivid a personality to be easily forgotten. Tom Bowen continued to be a frequent visitor at the Crane house, and Mort found himself listening with interest to any news his friends might bring from the Weston household. Tom had several times spoken of his wish to have Freida meet the Weston children, but it was not until June that he announced a picnic for this purpose at his place in the country. Tom's bungalow was perched on a bluff above the river beyond the urban encroachment. He boasted a bathing beach and the guests were told to bring their bathing suits.

The Westons were already there when the Cranes arrived, and it was apparent at once that Weston was not wholly edified by the program his brother-in-law had arranged. He had taken off his coat and stretched himself upon a wicker *chaise longue* on the screened veranda, with a pitcher of ice water within easy reach.

"Have something, Crane? I brought my flask along as a protection against snake



bites. Never saw the snakes, but the mosquitoes are the very devil out here. My kids are crazy about Tom's place and Mrs. Weston likes it, but the country club suits me better. I've seen you there, haven't I?"

As Crane didn't belong to the Country Club the remark was not wholly tactful. Alice and Mrs. Weston had gone into the house to put on their bathing suits, and the youngsters had already followed Tom down the diagonal path that led to the beach. Mort was debating whether (Continued on page 142)

"What's the matter, papa? Don't you feel well?" Freida asked, stealing close to him.

A. S. M.

Hutchinson

Another of a Series of



It rains Brazil nuts.

INSECTS!

I was told that the insect life of the Amazon forests is such that every leaf carries its swarms, and that if you brush through the undergrowth, you will carry your swarms and will have considerable difficulty in getting rid of them.

I therefore did not brush through the undergrowth.

When I went in the forest I went where there was a path and I kept well in the middle of it.

Nevertheless—

Insects, I may tell you, do not wait to be fetched. I give this freely and firmly as my contribution to entomology and I may add that I knew it by personal experience before I went to Brazil. I have often thought that I am directly descended from that princess of the fairy story whose bed they made up with a dozen mattresses and put a pea beneath the whole. The idea was that if she was a real princess her tender skin would show the mark of the pea even through all that protection. She was and her skin did, and as I have said I am sure she is somewhere up my genealogical tree and not many branches away. For my skin is like that too; it shows every mark; and every creature which combines stinging, crawling or flying, and worrying as its means of livelihood seems to know it. If there is a midge or a mosquito, a fly or a flea, within a square mile of me he comes to me straight and quick and famished; and it was by reason of this peculiarity of mine that the one thing that did give me qualms about visiting the tropics was the thought of mosquitoes.

Well, the mosquitoes out there were not so bad. I trembled when in my cabin I saw my first Amazon mosquito; but I found to my surprise and joy that the mosquitoes—at least all the mosquitoes that I saw—were not what I had imagined the tropical mosquito to be. I had thought, and I had shuddered in the thinking, that the mosquito was a blood-thirsty and voracious creature that would come at me directly he saw me roaring like a tiger and like a tiger would devour me. I saw my first mosquito on my cabin wall and I crept up to him holding my slipper in my hand, and my breath with whatever it is that you hold your breath with, and I landed him one—to my surprise and joy I landed him one—that sent part of him half way through the wall and part half way through the slipper; and all the time I was up the Amazon I found—to my surprise and joy—that the mosquitoes were as easy to kill as that and as harmless as that. The mosquitoes did not trouble me.

BUT—

They have an insect out there which lives in the grass.

If you walk in grassy places he leaps onto your ankles and lives

on you. I walked on grassy places. When my ankles were as rings of fire, which I employed the better part of the night in scratching and making worse I, thinking they were mosquito bites, showed them at the bathing pool to a British resident.

"Mosquitoes?" said I, scratching.

"No," he said, "those are maqueens."

(I have to say here, and before I go on to disclose the full horror of the maqueens, that the way I have spelled it is the way it is pronounced but probably not within yards of the way it really is spelt. I tried to get the correct spelling of all the indigenous objects which attracted my notice up the Amazon, but as everybody appeared to spell everything differently I gave up this branch of research and will guarantee only that my spelling is phonetic.)

"No," said he, "those are maqueens," and proceeded to tell me about them what I have told you—so far.

"Well," said I, scratching, "I'll take jolly good care to keep off the grass in future. These things are half killing me. Now, tell me, what about these that have already had a go at me? Where are they? I've searched my socks, and I've searched my trousers, and I've searched my bedding and I can't find a trace of them. Where—"

"No, no," said my friend; "you wouldn't."

"Do they drop off, then, immediately they have had their bite? Well, that's—"

"No, no; oh, no, they don't drop off; they're in you. They burrow in under your skin, you know. They—"

"Burrow in under my skin! Burrow in under— But, man alive, that's death to them, going under my skin."

"Oh, but my dear fellow, they don't die; they—"

"Don't die! Don't die! Do you mean to tell me they are inside me alive?"

"Oh, rather; oh, yes, of course. They get under your skin and lay their eggs there, you know."

"Lay their eggs! Lay their—Great gosh, do you tell me these brutes are camped in under my ankles laying eggs in me?"

"They lay their eggs all right; not necessarily under your ankles, I mean. They move about all over your body, you know. They go up your legs and get into your body and work their way through every— It's rather interesting. They—"

"Interesting! Interesting! But, good heavens, man—"

"Oh, rather; it really is interesting, their intelligence, you know. First of all they get into your—"

He proceeded to describe a kind of grand tour of the human system which these insects make. As far as I could understand they visit each organ of the body in turn, laying eggs presumably as they go, and the only thing I could not make out was how, or if ever, they would leave me and in what state, if in any living state, I should be when they did. On this point my friend was hazy and presently I left him and hurried back to my ship and to my cabin. I wanted to be alone. In one sense, and this was what appalled me, I never again would be alone. I was occupied. I was a garrison. An army was billeted on me and positively I could feel the tramp of their feet marching about within me.

I got into my cabin and counted my bites. On one leg I had fourteen and on the other twelve. Twenty-six! Twenty-six living creatures prowling about within me and all laying eggs! How many eggs did these brutes lay? Ten? No, much more; probably they spawned them out by the hundreds. Suppose I took a moderate estimate and gave them a hundred each. Twenty-six multiplied by a hundred—2,600! Take away the number you first thought of, twenty-six—twenty-six full blooded, my blooded, parent maqueens—and that left 2,574. Two thousand five hundred and seventy-four healthy, my health, young maqueens being hatched out, fed, reared and educated inside me! I was a crèche, a walking crèche!

Well, I thought I must surely die, and die a singularly horrible death; but in point of fact I did not die and beyond the agonies caused me by my imagination I never felt any discomfort that I could attribute to my being a Home for Young Maqueens.

on BUGS & NUTS

Amusing Adventures Along The AMAZON

Illustrations by Ralph Barton

Perhaps the original twenty-six, the pilgrim father maqueens, died soon after landing. Perhaps they were not very experienced pioneer maqueens and lost their way in my legs and wandered about, too harassed to lay eggs, and perished miserably.

However, there are other things in Brazil besides insects. There are nuts. Brazil is "where the nuts come from"; and as that household phrase had its origin in "Charlie's Aunt," and as "Charlie's Aunt" was first staged quite a considerable number of years ago, it is clear that nuts must have been coming from Brazil for a good long time. Plenty must have come. Our boat was employed in making them her chief cargo and she on this occasion loaded and brought away 1,700 tons.

Seventeen hundred tons—tons—of nuts at one scoop, and the kind specifically known as Brazil nuts at that! It astonished me. Who eats Brazil nuts? They are the most infernally difficult nuts to get from their shells that ever I did see, and I have never noted them consumed anywhere (as are walnuts or peanuts) as a popular delicacy. They must be eaten in vast quantities, raw, by people who never invite me to their houses. I should say there must be entire communities in England who live solely on Brazil nuts.

But if I was surprised at the apparent demand for Brazil nuts I was interested much more to see how they grow. I thought they grew singly, like gooseberries. They do not. They grow in parties, groups, families of some twenty or more, each cluster contained in a huge shell like a coconut shell only very much larger and shaped, as I seem to remember learning is the globe, like a ball, slightly flattened at the poles. Each nut within this case is tucked away in a dear little space all neatly by itself.

There is yet another extraordinary Brazilian nut called the sappercaier nut. The sappercaier nut—it probably is not spelt a bit like that—I feel exactly like the Child's Guide to Knowledge when I am giving information like this—is like the Brazil nut in shape but is infinitely sweeter and more tasty and its shell much less stubborn to crack.

Q—Pray, then, why is it not exported in place of, or as well as, its less attractive cousin?

A—It is not exported because, before it can be gathered, it falls a prey to the ants and other noxious and voracious insects with which, as we have learned in a previous lesson, the forests of the Amazon abound. I have told you, my dear little Arthur, that the Brazil nut is enclosed in a large, strong and formidable sheath or husk to protect them, when they fall, from the insects. In this protective sheath, husk, case or coating, they are gathered by the natives, extracted from their husk, and delivered on board great ships.

Q—Pray, then, has not the juicy sappercaier also an outer shell, sheath, husk or case?

A—It has indeed.

Q—Pray, then, how comes it that it is not protected?

A—That it is not protected on falling to earth is, again, my dear little Arthur, an instance of that all-providing mercy toward mankind which many times we have noted in nature in our walks abroad. So huge and weighty is the outer husk, shell, sheath, case or coating of the sappercaier, and so lofty the enormous tree on which it is suspended, that were it to fall in its entirety and haply to light upon the head of a human being it would catch him such a knock that he never would want to eat again either the sappercaiers thus delivered to him or anything else because he would be dead.

Abandoning that beautiful style, and reverting to my own nervous English, those are the facts about the sappercaier and very remarkable I thought them. The whole nut is about the size of a football

and infallibly would kill anyone on whose head it fell; as it is the lid opens, the nuts shower down—and the ants

do the rest at a speed which makes this excellent nut not worth gathering for export.

The nuts that are exported, the Brazils, require to be shipped cautiously, housed comfortably, and nursed on the voyage with constant care. Brought off from shore in specially constructed lighters, they may not be shipped in the rain; and as there are on the Amazon, as I have said, two seasons, a wet season and a rainy season, the time lost to shipowners in hanging about for the rain to stop is pretty considerable.

In the lighters they are shoveled into immense iron buckets and craned up and down into holds. This, and all the work of shipping and unshipping cargo, is performed by gangs of native stevedores each under its own Portuguese or Brazilian foreman—men of superb physique, some of them, and some of very inferior physique but wonderfully strong.

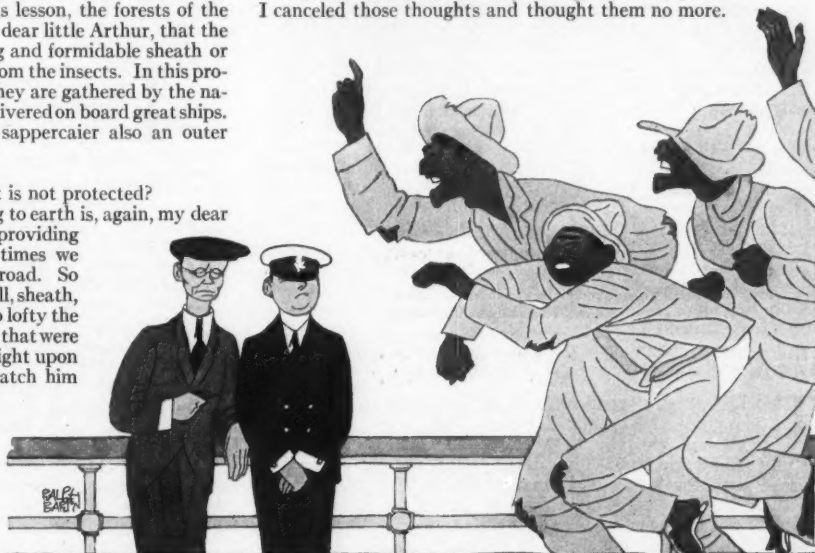
They perform all the cargo work, these native stevedores, and I have enjoyed watching them. When we were alongside a dock the gang of the hour would come aboard us in a body when the dock gates were opened. They rushed aboard pell-mell, scrambling, jostling and shouting as they vied with one another to be first to get to work. They always did this and it was a spectacle, noble and uplifting in its joy of work, that uplifted me to watch.

"How different," moralized I to myself, "from our British working men! Who has not seen, and deplored the sight of, the British laborer crawling morosely to his task? Who ever could imagine him rushing with eager shouts to his work, jostling his mates in his ardor, as do these who, in their dusky skins, doubtless he would despise as 'blooming niggers'? Ah, what a lesson is here for us!"

The First Officer was beside me on deck one morning as, with these thoughts, I watched this noble uplifting spectacle, and I was about to communicate my thoughts on it to him when he spoke first.

"Lazy shirkers," said he, scowling upon the tossing mob. "Lazy shirkers; rushing to pinch the softest jobs!"

I did not communicate my thoughts to him; and I canceled those thoughts and thought them no more.



The native stevedores are greedy for work. There's a Brazilian reason!

The Pleasure

By

Arthur
Somers
Roche



"But, M'sieu," protested Mlle. Eloise,
"this is not a time to examine my shop."

The Story So Far:

TO THE wealthy residents of Palm Beach the story seemed incredible. Eugene Cassenas had been murdered! Cassenas, the gay debauchee, the spoiled favorite of fortune, had been stabbed to death. But no one was more amazed than the lovely and innocent Helen Ripley when she heard the shocking news. At midnight, only a few hours before the body was discovered, Helen had gone to a secret rendezvous with Cassenas; and, finding him hideously drunk, had fled from him in terror. Now she was implicated in the ugly scandal.

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Helen Ripley, unaware that her handsome suitor was engaged to Gladys Gary, had come to Palm Beach under the impression that Cassenas intended to marry her. Fortunately Mrs. Wellington Wiswell, the social leader of Palm Beach, had offered Helen her protection, shielding her against the malicious attacks of gossip.

The most relentless investigator of the mystery was the Reverend Thaddeus Workman, a picturesque evangelist who had formerly been a detective. Cassenas, he discovered, had possessed six Moorish daggers, five of which he had given to friends. With one of these daggers he had been stabbed. The strongest suspicion centered on a certain Mr. Terry, Cassenas's avowed enemy, who on the night of the murder had actually threatened to kill him. Suspicion pointed also toward General Gary with whom Cassenas had quarreled, and toward Kildare, Cassenas's shifty valet.

Workman's effort revealed much confusing evidence, but no light. Finally Workman received a special message from General Gary to come to see him at once about some illuminating new facts. In high hope of finding a solution to the crime, Workman, accompanied by detective Quintard, set out for the testy old General's home.

IN HIS ugly old house the General welcomed them. "Gentlemen, I have received a letter in the morning mail. Delayed, somehow, in sending. From Cassenas. Read it."

Doctor Workman almost snatched it from the withered old hand. He read it.

"My dear General Gary: I owe you and Gladys humble apologies for asking a girl like your daughter to marry a man like myself. For striking you I offer deeper apologies. Without Gladys the world is nothing. I shall kill myself tonight, and only hope that with my death will pass all resentment on your part. Eugene L. Cassenas."

"You see, that ends the mystery," said the General.

"It does," said Workman. He kicked Quintard, who was about to protest. "May we have this letter?"

"Of course," agreed the General.

"Thank you," said Doctor Workman. He almost hustled Quintard out of the house.

"But it's a clumsy forgery. It looks like Cassenas's writing, and it's on the stationery of his house-boat, but it's forgery," cried Quintard, when they were on the sidewalk. "It may have fooled the General, but it doesn't fool me."

"How do you know it fooled the General?" asked Workman.

"You mean that—"

"Do you notice that he didn't offer us the envelope in which

Buyers

A New Mystery Novel Laid in Exotic Palm Beach

Illustrations by
Charles D. Mitchell



CHARLES D. MITCHELL

A word of explanation from Workman
silenced the indignant French girl.

the letter came to him?" asked Workman.

"Let's go back and get it," said Quintard.

Workman shook his head. "Why let him think we're suspicious? There isn't any envelope. If you asked him he'd say that he destroyed it."

"Nevertheless," said Quintard stubbornly, "let's see what he says."

He was in an obstinate mood and Workman could not restrain him. So they went back to the house. But General Gary told them that in his excitement at the contents of the letter he had dropped the envelope, and that later it could not be found. It had been swept up and burned, along with other old trash. He pointed to some ashes on a fireplace as proof.

"What did I tell you?" exulted Workman, when once again they were outside.

"Then Gary writes himself a letter, signing Cassenas's name, stating that Cassenas is going to commit suicide—did he kill Cassenas after all?" cried Quintard.

Workman shrugged. "Quintard, when this case is solved you will be able to state that you have come to the end of the most mysterious murder of them all. Kildare, Terry, Cassenas's father-in-law, the woman who fled into Spray at half-past three in the morning—and now General Gary. Did he kill him? The Lord knoweth, but not His humble servant, Thaddeus Workman."

CHAPTER XXII

THEY walked slowly along the ocean front until they came to a bench, far enough away from General Gary's home to be unobserved by him. Workman took out the letter signed with the name of Cassenas. He studied it a moment, then handed it to Quintard.

"You say it's like the writing of Cassenas?" he asked.

Quintard nodded. "As I remember his writing, from having examined his check-books yesterday."

"And yet you think it's a forgery?"

"Of course I do. Look how labored the writing is! Cassenas's writing was dashing, impetuous—like the man himself. This has the appearance of impetuosity, but a glance tells me how carefully it was done. Don't you agree with me?"

Workman assented. "But General Gary is hardly the man one would expect to be accomplished in this particular line. A man of parts, but not of forgery."

"That's because you assume that the General is dishonest about the matter," objected Quintard. "You leap at the conclusion that the General wrote the letter himself."

"And yet," said Workman mildly, "my prophecy, that the General would say that he had destroyed the envelope, came true, didn't it?"

"Y-e-s," admitted Quintard, reluctantly. "But still, that is no proof that General Gary is a forger."

"What saith Paul to the Corinthians?" countered the revivalist. "He said that he wrote that he might have the proof of them. General Gary has written, and we have the proof of him."

"How?" demanded the prosecutor's man.

Workman lifted his great shoulders impatiently. "Sometimes we have evidence but cannot read its meaning. This is one of those times. My instinct tells me——"

"Instinct never convinced a jury," scoffed Quintard. The sandy-haired man was elated at finding a weakness in Workman's reasoning.

"Ah, not a jury," Workman caught him up. "But the man who presents the case to the jury—and I am in the latter's position. My instinct tells me that this letter is forged."

"Nonsense," said Quintard brusquely. "I told you it was."

"Forged by General Gary," continued the revivalist, imperturbably.

"Well, now that we're kissing a lot of facts tenderly on the brow, and telling them to run away and play and not tease the cat, suppose I tell you what my instinct tells me," said Quintard.

Workman hid a smile at the other's flippancy. "What do the Proverbs tell us? That the liberal soul shall be made fat. I am a liberal man. Tell me. I am broadminded enough to wish to know."

"That Cassenas was *murdered*, not the victim of his own hand. It is a physical impossibility for a man to kill himself as Cassenas was killed. Now, then, General Gary is no fool. He's got a pretty good record behind him, remember. No boob could have made the career that he's had. True, he's old, but I didn't notice any senility about him. Now, then, why would an able old gentleman like the General forge a letter that contains disprovable facts?"

"Exactly," retorted Workman. "Why? Because—this is a

theory, my dear young man, nothing more—because sometimes people are trapped in circumstances so deeply that they snatch at any thread to pull themselves out."

"But how would the General be trapped? He's got an alibi! His knife, the one that Cassenas gave him, has an alibi, if knives can have such a thing. How on earth do you figure that General Gary is in a trap?" Quintard was impatient.

"When," said Workman slowly, "I can answer that question, I can also tell you who killed Cassenas. But let us not, my dear young friend, waste time in useless argument. We both are agreed that the letter is a forgery. I think Gary forged it; you are not convinced. Well, let me amplify my remark of a second ago. When we find out who committed the forgery, we will know who killed Cassenas."

"In other words, if the General wrote the letter, then he's the murderer, eh?" demanded Quintard.

Workman shook his head. "I didn't say that. What I said was that when we find out who wrote the letter, we will know who killed Cassenas. Perhaps two people, one who forged the letter, another who did the killing; but one will lead to the other. Of that I am certain."

"And until someone comes around and admits he wrote the letter, we twiddle our thumbs, eh?"

"Why? Does the introduction of a new piece of evidence diminish the value of other pieces of evidence? Think of the things we have learned: Terry's enmity toward Cassenas; Terry's engagement of a troupe of theatrical people to pose as servants in his house; Cassenas's secret wedding, the withholding of his wife's proper married name from the undertaker and burial authorities."

"And Cassenas was in the army, abroad, when Norah Murphy died," said Quintard.

"Yes. That's an item that may prove of importance. It would indicate that her father was willing to aid and abet Cassenas in his secrecy about his marriage."

"A friend of Cassenas, then. Not liable to murder him——"

Workman interrupted the other. "Don't assume too much. Stick to the facts. And here are others: a woman, of sizable build, is seen hurrying along the Lake Trail at about the time of the murder, entering Terry's grounds—my boy, here is something to be done. Miss Ripley, hurrying from Cassenas's patio, tore her dress on a hedge and left a remnant of cloth there to prove her story. Now, it is quite possible that this other woman left something to mark her passage. A bit of cloth, a dropped handkerchief——"

"I'm on the job," said Quintard. "I'll comb the place—and the Trail—so fine——"

"Good," said Workman.

"And what'll you be doing?" asked Quintard.

Workman hid a smile. Quintard would try not to double-cross the evangelist again, but he could not help being jealous of Workman's activities. There would be glory in finding who killed Gene Cassenas, and Quintard wanted some of that glory, at least.

"Whatever I do, be assured that I will tell you when we meet," he said.

And with that Quintard appeared to be satisfied. They parted, the prosecutor's man cutting across a fairway of the golf links toward the Lake, and Workman walking slowly south along Ocean Boulevard. Reaching the bathing Casino, practically deserted at this hour of the afternoon, he telephoned Mrs. Wiswell, to learn that that matron had lunched at Bradley's and was not yet home. He telephoned Bradley's and she was summoned to the receiver.

"You, Tad? Bless you. The Lord has answered my prayer. I've been backing eleven and the animal has refused to show up. Say that you wish to drag me away from here, and I, weak woman that I am, will yield to your exhortations."

Despite himself, the Reverend Tad grinned. "I'd like to talk to you, and if we could have a cup of tea——"

"Holy Tad yielding to the blandishments of my sex and to the fads of fashion! Palm Beach corrupting the stern battler for the Lord! Tea and Tad; Tad and tea! It ain't humanly possible, but——"

"Of woman's talk there is no ending," chuckled Workman.

"Is that Biblical?" demanded Mrs. Wiswell.

"It ought to be," he retorted. "Where shall we meet? I'm at the bathing Casino."

She uttered an exclamation. "I just remembered; I have a tea engagement. But if you'd come down here, and ride me in a chair——"

"In five minutes," he replied.

And in almost that number of minutes he rode in a chair to Bradley's, to find Mrs. Wiswell, amazingly punctual, waiting on the steps. She entered the chair.

"Casa Blanca," she told the colored boy. She turned to Workman. "The Langford Whites, who have named their villa after themselves. It's only a mile, but if that will give you time enough——"

"Plenty. In fact, a moment ought to be enough. I want to get the name of somebody who knows all about the people down here."

"I know a lot," she reminded him.

"Of course. But someone who keeps up with *all* the gossip, who knows, off-hand, who was engaged to whom and why they didn't marry—that sort of thing. About everyone down here."

"Why, you want Mark Suter," she told him. "Correspondent of 'City Scandals.' He's been coming here twenty-odd years. But, why, Tad?"

"The Cassenas affair, of course. Another woman has entered into the case, and I'd like to talk to this—Suter, you say?"

"Yes. He lives at the Lanthia. Tad, I'm boiling over with curiosity. Aren't you going to let me in?"

The evangelist smiled. "When the time comes, nothing shall be hidden from you, my dear Mrs. Wiswell. But at the moment, no."

"Spoken like the brute you are, Doctor Workman," she chided. "However, I will wait."

"I saw Miss Ripley an hour ago, coming out of Bradley's," said the revivalist. "You are a good woman. You have lifted the shadow of care from her."

Mrs. Wiswell indulged in a sound that was like a snort. "If you flatter me. My innocent friend, no woman can chase care from another woman's countenance. It is Terry who worked the miracle. He saw her last night at the Connors' masque. He came to our table at luncheon and invited the young lady to go motoring at three. If tragedy is stalked by comedy, then romance watched over both, my friend. Yet, what could be more natural? Both suspected of a hideous crime—— Dr. Tad, Terry didn't kill Cassenas. I've seen him. I know he didn't."

"I hope not," said Workman.

He bade her good-by at Casa Blanca and ordered the chair man to retrace the way toward the Lanthia. Arrived there, he sent up his name to Mark Suter, and in a few minutes was in the presence of the man who faithfully chronicled the scandals of Palm Beach for the leprous sheet in New York.

A plump, good-humored-seeming little man, whose thick-rimmed eyeglasses with their heavy black ribbon somehow made him look like a fashionable hair-dresser masquerading as a physician, Suter was seated at a typewriter as Workman entered his room. He waved a welcoming hand.

"Just a moment, Doctor, until I bat out the end of this paragraph." He pounded with amazing rapidity at the machine for a couple of minutes, then drew the sheet of paper out, put it in an envelope which he sealed and stamped, then turned to his visitor.

"What can I do for you?" he asked. "What is there in common between the soul-saver turned sleuth again, and the man who writes for 'City Scandals'?"

His manner was most disarming. It was as though he admitted readily the dirty fashion of his livelihood, offered no defence of it, and professed himself ready to do a favor. Despite his oblique moral sense, which permitted him to wax fat on scandal, and—it was whispered—on occasional blackmail, Suter was a likable chap.

"May I speak in confidence?" asked Workman.

Suter's fat face wrinkled in a grin. "I make my living by betraying confidences, Doctor," he chuckled. "But this time—yes."

"What do you know about General Gary?" asked the evangelist.

Suter's eyes became suddenly sharp. "Is it permitted that I draw inferences, Doctor? The General's daughter's engagement is broken to Gene Cassenas; there is an ugly scene; Cassenas is murdered."

"I cannot prevent your thoughts," replied Workman. "But—you have promised confidence."

"And shall not betray it," said Suter. "General Gary, eh?" He reached for the envelope which he had just sealed. "A coincidence, Doctor. And I'm inclined to be garrulous in speech, though terse in my writing. Read what I have just written, for next week's 'Scandals,' about the General."

He handed the typewritten paper to Workman, who took it and read it.

The latest Palm Beach scandal, which is also tragedy, and of which more has been written in another column, invites speculation



"Are you making love to me?" Helen asked. "In a sort of juvenile, utterly absurd fashion, I am," he answered.

as to the future of Gladys Gary, daughter of the distinguished ex-Confederate General. Whom will she marry now? Will the involving of her name in the circumstances surrounding Cassenas's murder hurt her matrimonial chances? One is inclined to think not. General Gary is too prominent a social figure. Strange that he, whose life has had so many queer events, should be confronted with scandal at the end of his life. However, a man who,

because of youthful gaiety, was banished from the ancestral home, and was forced, at one time, to make his living as a teacher of drawing and penmanship until the parental anger had died, who lost everything in the Civil War and then recouped his fortunes, will probably be not dismayed over this latest buffet from Fortune. The General is, as Broadway hath it, somewhat hardboiled.



"And that," said Suter, as Workman looked up, "is, briefly, all that I know of the General. I mean, of his private life. All the world knows of his public career. But I happened to learn, several years ago, of his lively youth and the teaching episode. Any help to you?"

"Thank you," said Workman, evading a direct reply. "Can you tell me anything of Gene Cassenas?"

"Nothing that you wouldn't know already, Doctor," replied Suter. "Are you on the trail of the murderer?"

Workman rose. "I hope so. But—one cannot tell. Thank you again."

"Not at all. It's seldom that I serve the church," grinned Suter. "It's a pleasure."

He bowed his guest out, and before Workman had taken half a dozen steps, the typewriter was banging again in his room.

General Gary had taught penmanship, among other things, in his early youth. It didn't necessarily follow that a man who taught handwriting could imitate handwriting. But one facile with a pen had an advantage over one less easy in its handling. Of course, any cunning the General may have possessed sixty-odd years ago might well have been dissipated by time. Those old, feeble, white hands could hardly be expected to hold a pen at all, much less imitate the writing of a young and virile man. Yet, it was possible.

Now, then, why would the General have committed a forgery?

The obvious answer was that he did so to remove suspicion from himself as the murderer of Cassenas. But the obvious answer was absurd, because Gladys Gary had told Workman that upon their return from Cassenas's house-boat, the General had been so excited that she stayed with him until almost dawn, when he finally fell asleep. Cassenas had been slain before dawn.

Could Gladys Gary have lied to protect her father? Certainly not, Workman told himself. Had she been lying he would have known it. Also, General Gary was not the man to kill another man and then try to evade the consequences. Why, then, did he commit forgery and—by implication at any rate—lie?

There was an obvious answer to this question, too, but it was not absurd. The answer was that General Gary lied and forged to protect someone other than himself. Who was that someone?

Workman had told Quintard that when he knew who forged the letter he would know who killed Cassenas. Yet, now that he did know—was practically certain, at any rate—who had forged the letter, he seemed no nearer the discovery of the murderer.



"Sorry to double-cross you again, Doctor, but you're trying too hard to save this girl. I've been suspicious all along. Now I'm certain. Come along," he said to Helen.

the nicest things in a world altogether too factual.

So, liking the man, she felt a ridiculous delight in the fact that the motorcar from which he alighted at shortly before three was not a closed car, driven by a chauffeur, but was open, long, racy-looking, with the only seat tilted far back. Also, it was cream-yellow in color.

It was a young automobile, not a sedate, experienced affair; it was the kind of car in which love, not calculation, goes a-riding.

And the man who waved a gay hand to her looked younger than the man who had torn the Cassenas character to shreds, who had contemptuously met the implied threat of Cassenas with stern counter-threat. That man had been hard, cynical, possessed by a hatred to which everything else in his character was subordinated. This man today, though his hair was gray and his face lined, seemed to have the spirit of youth. She liked the way he dressed, too. The checked linen knickers, the brown stockings with tasseled garters of the same color, the white sweater and the brown tie, and the tan sports-coat: these were, of course, minor matters, having nothing to do with sterling worth or true nobility of soul, but they eased the road to liking, somehow.

"Ready?" he asked.

"For a wonder, I am," she told him.

They walked to the car; their fingers touched as she stepped into it. Ridiculously, she felt herself color faintly; she hoped he didn't notice it. He walked around the car, climbed in beside her and shifted the gears. Smoothly the machine slid down the Wiswell drive and out upon the ocean road.

"Any particular place you'd like to go?" he inquired.

She shook her head. "Anywhere," she told him.

He headed the car south, and for a (Continued on page 153)

"The first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Proverbs tells us not to boast ourselves of tomorrow; for we know not what a day may bring forth," he rebuked himself.

Truly, it seemed there was no end to this mystery.

CHAPTER XXIII

HAPPY the young, to whom the motorcar is still a pleasure vehicle instead of something to take us somewhere! Helen Ripley knew that she liked Terry; indeed, she had sudden tiny fears, quick tiny ecstasies, at thought or mention of him. Of course, this was all absurd; she barely knew the man, and this under circumstances that, to put it mildly, were bizarre. Moreover, a man who had overheard her making an engagement to go riding at midnight with Gene Cassenas would hardly be interested in the type of person she must seem to him. Nevertheless, he had caught at a word of faith as, in possibly more romantic ages, a gallant would have caught at a rose tossed by his lady. He had sought her out today, was about to call for her . . . Absurd, yes. But, she told herself defiantly, absurdities are

Honey

Samuel Scoville, Jr., Begins a Series of South African Stories About the Queerest Animals Alive

Illustrations by Herman Palmer

THE South African sun had stilled every birdnote on the veldt save one. A dust-gray honey-guide with a voice like the sharpening of a saw, called and called before the burrow of a ratel, or honey-badger, that strange beast, half-badger, half-weasel which a hundred thousand years ago went into partnership with a bird. At last a round earless head with deep-set little eyes which glittered like crumbs of glass was thrust into the open.

For a long moment the beast and the bird looked at each other and it was as if some secret message passed between them. Then the ratel, that three-foot fighting-machine of the veldt, battleship-gray above and black beneath, trundled along after the honey-guide, which fluttered ahead calling back a word of power as it flew.

As the squat animal slipped beneath an abatis of mimosa thorns, white as bleached bone, he came suddenly face to face with a Cape dog, or *wilde honde* as the Boers have christened him, big as a mastiff.

Followed the prettiest fight the veldt had seen since the day when an old buffalo bull bested a full-grown lion. As usual the wild dog went into battle whimpering and with his tail between his legs—for so the *wilde honde* of the veldt camouflages a courage fierce as fire.

As usual, too, he was soon joined by six of his kind for the Cape dog is a confirmed gangster.

Odds, however, mean nothing to a ratel. Like a baby tank he rolled into action and with his round head tucked down beneath his bent forelegs, traded slashes with all seven dogs—and had the best of the bargain each time.

Again and again they tried to drive their stiletto-like teeth through his tough, loose hide, but it was like biting a leather pillow, while the ratel from beneath swung and ripped his curved claws through skin and flesh and sinew.

At intervals his murderous jaws, armed with some of the fiercest fighting teeth on earth, would grip an unwary dog like a steel trap. When that happened said dog stopped fighting—forever.

In less than ten minutes the battle was over. Some of the *wilde honde* lay stark in the open; others had crawled into the brush to die decently; none were in any condition to interfere with the ratel's quest.

As he waddled forward, following again the calling bird, a heavy jowl was suddenly thrust out of the brush beside him and the dull eyes of a spotted hyena, that ghoul of the jungle summoned by the scent of shed blood, looked into his own pin-points of fire.

Although twice the size of the ratel, with the most powerful jaws of any animal, that scavenger of the veldt took one look at the flat gray beast before him and lunched away with a howl like the laugh of a maniac.

A mile farther and the bird led its follower along the edge of a dense thicket. Suddenly from its depths came that ghostly sound full of hate and soulless cruelty which turns the spine of a man to ice and his heart to water—the hiss of a great serpent. The deep-set eyes of the ratel flashed in the shadow like green fire as a yellow six-foot Cape cobra reared up before him. Above its spread hood, lidless fatal eyes gleamed like rubies of death as it swayed back and forth like a clever boxer feinting for an opening.

The yellow cobra has the temper of the Devil, its master, and

such speed and strength that even those professional snake-killers, the mongoose and musihond, attack it with caution. Not so the ratel, for the tactics of his clan are to come to close grips and fight and fight and keep on fighting. Lowering his head the ratel flattened his body against the ground until his loose hide hung around him like a screen and pattered toward the menacing figure swaying in the sunlight.

Instantly the cobra struck so swiftly that a human eye could hardly have followed the dart of its deadly head, yet its hollow fangs spent themselves harmlessly on the thick hair and tough skin of the imperturbable ratel.

Again and again the snake struck furiously until the yellow venom trickled from the corners of its grim mouth, yet failed each time to find any vulnerable spot in the honey-badger's defense.

Suddenly the long jaws of the gray beast shot forward and closed on the serpent's steel-like body just below the hood. There was a crunching sound, the great snake went suddenly limp and the next moment the ratel was again following his calling guide.

A breath of coolness stole across the brassy glare of the plain as the partners finally reached the shade of a towering yellow wood tree. Far above them a cloud of bees went in and out of a hole in a decayed part of the trunk.

Few animals will face the black furious bees of the veldt—but the honey ratel is one of those few.

With a little hissing chuckle he gazed up at the guarded opening. Therein lay the lure which had led him far and far and of which the bird had called to him all the way.

Sinking his claws into the rough bark he hauled himself up by main strength.

As he reached the first branches the head of a black leopard appeared suddenly among the leaves just above him. With ears laid back, fierce teeth showing like white daggers in his red mouth and eyes which blazed in their triangular sockets like molten gold, the great cat's face was a scowling mask of utter rage.

From his gullet came that menacing cough which with a leopard means killing, and he moved forward until the charcoal-black rosettes on his dusked skin showed in the light like the pattern in watered silk.

Still the unimpressed ratel continued to climb. Suddenly the leopard's left paw slashed downwards with a blow which would have dropped a bullock dead in its tracks. The ratel was swept from the tree as if struck by lightning. Coiling himself into a ball the squat animal rebounded from the ground as if he were built of steel and leather and the next moment was mounting the tree again.

This time the leopard waited until the invader of his retreat was well within reach and then gripped him with claws like black sickles and dragged him up to where he could bring his four terrible fighting-teeth into play. Nothing could have suited the ratel better.

In-fighting is that grim little battler's long suit and the animal who comes to a clinch with a honey-badger is giving hostages to death.

Twisting his agile body as his opponent raised his head, the ratel locked his daggered jaws on the shimmering black throat which for an instant showed unprotected. Then, closing his



The great leopard's face was a scowling mask of rage.

eyes, he settled down contentedly. Not until he or the leopard died would those jaws unlock.

With a gurgling snarl the great cat sank teeth and claws into the loose shifting skin of his opponent and failing to break his grip, leaped desperately into mid-air. Arching his back, as before, the honey-badger fell on top, while every second his teeth drove deeper into the leopard's throat.

On the ground that tiger of the tree-tops fought desperately but in vain. He could neither pierce the gray armor nor unloose the grip of those terrible teeth. His lithe grace, his comparatively great size, his raging ferocity helped him not at all against the unrelenting persistence of his clumsy-looking opponent. The end came when the ratel's fangs finally cut clear through the other's jugular.

Not until the black body had begun to stiffen did the ratel loose his grip.

Then for the third time he climbed the tree. And this time no

enemy appeared to keep him from the prize for which he had followed his bird guide and fought so hard for right of way.

Reaching the hole from which the bees poured in a steady stream, he ripped away the whole face of the trunk and was instantly covered by a cloud of buzzing, stinging bees which would have killed any less invulnerable animal.

Disregarding them entirely he tore out and dropped to the ground great masses of dripping honey-comb and tiers of waxen cells filled with the plump white grubs which his partner, the honey-guide, esteemed beyond all other food.

Then, waddling slowly down the tree, he feasted full at last on that essence of delight, that slow, sweet, liquid happiness of the ratel-folk which we humans call—"Honey."



Green INK

Illustrations by
John Richard
Flanagan

EPISCOPUS LANE in Wrychester, running between High Street and Chancelory Garden, was a short, narrow, dark alley, along which few people ever passed. The houses on either side were so old that their timbered fronts leaned towards each other, shutting out sun and sky save in occasional glimpses and patches; consequently the paneled and wainscoted chambers and rooms within their walls were somber, gloomy and provocative of silence. In nearly every house law was practised; you had only to walk down either side of the street to observe that on each deeply inset doorway was affixed a brass plate bearing the name of some solicitor.

Inside these doorways there was a perpetual smell of parchment, sealing-wax and old leather; the older men whom you met there had parchment faces; the younger ones showed signs that the bleaching process had already begun. And whether in summer or winter there was always a mysterious dimness, a sort of half-twilight in and around the lane, which seemed as proper to it as the dim religious light in nave and choir was to the time-worn cathedral whose spire rose high above the wide space which faced its narrow entrance.

Into that entrance there walked, about four o'clock one November afternoon, a man who, from his appearance, you would have taken to be the last man in the world to seek the society of lawyers. He was not at all the sort of person one meets in English cathedral cities, and such Wrychester folk as were about and noticed him as he turned out of High Street into the lane stared at him as only something particularly noticeable is stared at. A big, broad-shouldered, great-limbed man this, with a roll in his walk and a swagger of his arms; bronzed of face as if he knew much of burning suns and hot winds, and altogether so suggestive of the sea and the tropics and far-off sweltering beaches that you would have been surprised if, going close to him, you had not smelled the salt-laden breezes and the aromatic odors of Far-Away.

He wore a great slouch hat over his rather long hair, and a big grizzled beard swept down upon his blue reefer coat; in one hand was a stick which had certainly never been cut from an English coppice, and it seemed a wonder that in the other he did not carry a red and green parrot in a gaily gilded cage. That hand, however, was empty, and with it he presently thrust open the door



"I felt thure you'd thee reathon when it wath put before you, Mr. Grithe," said Goldmark suavely.

of one of the old houses in the center of the lane and strode, as if quite familiar with his surroundings, into the office within.

That office was pretty much like half a dozen offices on either side. There was a sort of counter, with a table behind it, and a chair or two, of the hard and uninviting pattern, and there were bills on the dusky walls, relating to the sale of desirable property, and shelves full of law books, and parcels of papers tied up with faded red tape, and tin boxes inscribed with the names of clients, and in the rear there was a door covered with green baize. The caller gave a glance at these things as he walked in, and he sniffed as if he recognized an atmosphere.

But in the same second his eyes went straight to a young man who sat writing at the table, a fellow of perhaps twenty-two or three years, spare of figure, meager of face, whose black hair was brushed straight back off a high, intellectual forehead, and whose thin lips and sharp nose betokened watchfulness and reserve. He was slow in looking up from his writing; when he did so and saw what stood on the other side of the counter, he laid down his pen, put the tips of his fingers together and let out one word.

"Yes?"

"Knyvett?" said the big man bruskiy.

"Dead!" answered the clerk.

"Raper?" continued the caller.

"Buried!" said the other.

"Then what d'y'e mean by saying Knyvett and Raper on that there brass plate outside?" demanded the big man. "If it says Knyvett and Raper—"

"If you'd looked closer," interrupted the clerk coldly, "you would have seen that it says Carsdale, late Knyvett and Raper. Mr. Knyvett's been dead ten years and Mr. Raper six. Mr. Carsdale's their successor. He's alive—and he's in!"

The big man stared: first at the clerk, then at the green door.

"In—there?" he asked.

"Precisely!" replied the clerk.

"Wish to consult him?"

The caller pulled reflectively at his great beard.

"Well, I dunno!" he said at last. "Knyvett and Raper, now . . . But this chap? Is he good? Is he sharp? Up to date? 'Cause if he isn't—"

"Mr. Carsdale is a smart man," said the clerk. He rose and went towards the inner door. "What name?" he inquired, turning on the caller.

By J. S. Fletcher

Whose Mystery Stories Have Enthralled

Kings and Presidents

"My name?" said the big man. "Name, eh? What may yours be, now?"

"That's neither here nor there," retorted the clerk sharply. "But it happens to be Grice—Mark Grice."

"Well, mine's Flapp," replied the caller. "John Flapp. And Flapp's a Wrychester name, young feller, and Grice, it ain't! Leastways I never heard of no Grices in my days. But Flapps! Lord love'ee, go and look in St. Pancridge Churchyard—and in St. Pancridge himself! Flapps, now—"

The clerk shrugged his shoulders, made a grimace indicative of his contempt for the subject, and opening the green door passed into an inner, softly lighted room; the caller, drumming his big fingers on the counter, heard a murmured exchange of question and answer. Then another voice than Grice's hailed him.

"Step in, Mr. Flapp!"

Flapp voyaged forward; Grice held the door open for him. When he had negotiated the entrance, the clerk shut him in, sniffed the air and grimaced again.

"Three sheets in the wind!" he muttered sneeringly. "Rum! With lemon in it."

He sat down again at his table and went on with his writing. From the inner room came a continual murmur of sound; Carsdale's accents, suave, professional; Flapp's deep, disjointed. Now and then there was a laugh; Carsdale laughed politely, good-humoredly; Flapp laughed joyously. Ten minutes passed; twenty; thirty. And Grice began to wonder. What did this man—who looked as if he had come out of a wood in the middle of Brazil, but who evidently knew Wrychester and had known Knyvett and Raper—want in that office?

The door opened at last. Flapp appeared. He stood half in, half out of the inner room. He looked as if he were about to leave and yet didn't know whether he would leave. Carsdale spoke—coaxingly, softly; Grice just caught the words.

"Now be a sensible man, Flapp!—be advised. Leave it with me!"

Flapp looked into the room and out of the room, cocking a shrewd eye alternately at the master within and the man without. Then he suddenly went back to Carsdale . . . and Carsdale, rising from his desk, crossed over and closed the door. After that Grice heard nothing.



But Grice's eyes were riveted on a row of coats which hung from pegs in a recess.

Five minutes went by. Then Flapp appeared again, lumbering in his massive way to the outer door. With his hand on the latch he turned, making a face at the clerk, who was watching him narrowly from behind his table.

"Name of Grice, eh, young feller!" he said satirically. "Not Wrychester born, then? Never were no Grices in Wrychester, not in my time! My name's Flapp, d'ye see?—good old Wrychester name, mine is!"

Then he went off, chuckling in his beard, and a breath of wind blowing past him from the street, Grice once more sniffed the fragrance of rum and lemon. Presently, too, Carsdale emerged from his private room, in his neat overcoat and silk hat, and with his smart umbrella noddily rolled in his carefully gloved fingers, and went homewards with his usual curt farewell. And at that Grice got up from his writing and went into his master's sanctum, and turning up the light above the desk glanced at the diary which lay there, open. It was Carsdale's habit—and he was a man of strict method—to enter up in that diary the particulars of any business done during the day, no matter how trifling or unimportant. There were two or three entries relative to that day, carefully written. But there was nothing about John Flapp—nothing! And Grice stood staring, thinking, recalling Carsdale's words to his strange visitor.

"Now be a sensible man, Flapp!—be advised. Leave it with me!"

Leave what with him? Money? Valuables? Papers? Something, at any rate, for Flapp had gone back and the door had been shut. What had Flapp left with Carsdale? Grice figured it out like this—Carsdale saw that Flapp had been drinking; knew that he would go on drinking again that evening; had found that Flapp had something of value on him, had persuaded Flapp to leave it with him for safe custody; Flapp had consented. What was it? Where was it? Grice looked, mechanically, at the safe in the corner. But Carsdale had the key to that; Grice never had it. And Grice shook his head, got into

his well worn overcoat, turned out the lights in both rooms and having locked the outer door went away to his lodgings and his tea-supper.

While he ate and drank he reflected that as far as he remembered this was the first time since his coming to Wrychester two years previously that there had been any secrecy about any of Carsdale's transactions. It was not a big practise, Carsdale's;

there was a bit of county court work, and a bit of conveyancing, and sometimes a police court case, and always there was an entry of everything in that desk diary. Why had Carsdale omitted to enter up John Flapp? Was it purposeful?—or was it an oversight? But Carsdale was not the man to deal in oversights.

Grice was the owner of an inveterate and ineradicable inquisitiveness. He had nosed into affairs ever since he was fifteen. He had been in three offices during his eight years of business life as an unarticled clerk, and he could have boasted, had he chosen, that he knew everything about the various transactions that had gone on in all three. It bothered him that he did not know what had occurred between Flapp and Carsdale. And as a rule Carsdale left him nothing to find out; usually he told the clerk all the details of all the business. It was Grice's nature to worry at a thing until he satisfied his curiosity about it, and now, between each mouthful, he kept asking himself over and over again—what did Flapp leave with Carsdale, and why?—and why had Carsdale made no note of the matter?

Grice had habits. One of them was to take a walk every evening outside the city to a village that lay a mile or so away. There was a quaint, old-fashioned tavern there, the Barleycorn, with a snug, raftered parlor, where you could sit for an hour over a pipe and a glass, talk to the rustics, if any happened to be in, or commune with your own thoughts over a dancing fire if you were alone. Thither, on this evening, Grice duly repaired, still bothering his inquisitive brains about the event of the afternoon, and the first person he saw on entering the fire-lighted parlor was Flapp.

Flapp sat in the chimney-corner, in an elbow chair, very much at his ease. He had a churchwarden pipe in one hand; the other held a tumbler three-quarters full of a ruby liquid in which something golden-yellow floated. He was raising this to his lips when the clerk entered, but at sight of Grice he set it down and pulled the bell-rope by the mantelpiece.

"Name of Grice, eh, young feller!" he exclaimed. "My name's Flapp—Wrychester born! And what're you going to have, my lad? Name your poison—my expense!"

Grice cocked a sly eye at the girl who appeared in answer to the bell.

"Very kind of you, Mr. Flapp," he answered as he took a chair and pulled out his pipe and tobacco. "Mary knows my taste—drop of the usual, Mary. So you've found your way out here, eh?" he continued, when the girl had gone. "Stopping here, perhaps?"

"Not me, my son," said Flapp. "Stopping at the Mitre, I am! Best hotels for me, d'ye see—what? Slap-up dinner there tonight, my boy—the best! A lot of nob's—lords and ladies, no doubt. Then came a-strolling along here—knew this place when I was a young'un! Wrychester born, I am! Left th' old place!—years ago!"

"And come back—years after," said Grice. He lifted his glass and nodded. "You'll see some changes, Mr. Flapp, no doubt?"

"Deal of change! Not in the place, though, young feller. People! They die off, d'ye see? Same as your firm. Knyvett dead. Raper dead. And, of course, buried. But Carsdale carrying on th' old business. Smart feller, Carsdale apparently."

"Get on all right with him?" asked Grice.

"Satisfactory. Wise man—close man. That's the sort to do business with—my business. Tell you what I came to see him about?"

"Not a word!" answered Grice. "Of course not!"

"Good feller! You'll be surprised when you hear. Will hear—some day. Great secret, d'ye see? Worth—piles o' money. Good money—golden money. Ah!"

"Quite safe with Mr. Carsdale," remarked Grice reassuringly. "Couldn't have gone to a better man, Mr. Flapp."

Flapp stroked his beard, sipped his rum and after relighting his pipe, stared at his company.

"Look more like a lawyer than he does, you do," he said. "Sharp-nosed devil you are! Like to stick your nose into other people's affairs, what? Them eyes o' yours, too. I seen eyes like them in a many places—been all over the world, I have. You take care you don't get hanged, young feller."

"I'll take care, Mr. Flapp," replied Grice. "Thank you for the advice. I'll take great care!"

"Known a many fellers with noses and eyes like yours as got hanged," said Flapp meditatively. "Bad 'uns! But I reckon you could keep a secret as well as your master."

"I reckon I could—if I were tried," replied Grice dryly.

Flapp consulted his glass again, and bent forward.

"Make them eyes o' yours stand an inch out o' your poor white face if I was to tell you what I left with Carsdale this

afternoon," he said. "Make your long nose a foot longer—see?"

"Would it?" laughed Grice. "That's interesting, Mr. Flapp. Very interesting!"

"But I ain't going to tell you," declared Flapp suddenly. "No!—tell nobody. You wait, young feller. And have another drink."

Grice had another drink, and so had Flapp, but the well of Flapp's confidence dried up when the replenished glasses arrived. He switched off to emotional reminiscences of dead and gone Flapps, and repeated various epitaphs which he said appeared on their tombstones, and Grice got no more out of him. Nine struck from the ancient clock in the corner, and the clerk rose.

"Going my way, Mr. Flapp?" he asked as he buttoned his overcoat.

"Not at present, my son," replied Flapp. "Comfortable, this here is—and good stuff. Better rum than they have at the Mitre. And what's your hurry—sit down."

But Grice went. He forsook opportunities of bettering his acquaintance with Flapp. Flapp would be at the Barleycorn again next evening—sure as fate. So he walked home and retired to bed at his usual hour, ten o'clock; he was up at his usual hour, seven, next morning, and as the cathedral clock struck a quarter to nine he turned into High Street on his way to Episcopus Lane. And there a policeman hailed him.

"Mr. Grice! Just a word!" He came close up and instinctively lowered his voice. "Have you heard what's happened during the night, Mr. Grice? Gentleman that was staying at the Mitre's been found drowned in the canal, between West Gate and the Barleycorn Inn, out Selbourne way. And one of our men says he directed him to your office yesterday afternoon. Do you know anything of him?"

Grice answered the question with another.

"Did you say—drowned?" he asked quietly. "Dead?"

"They say—the doctors—he'd been dead some hours," replied the policeman. "He was found at seven o'clock this morning, near Ashford Bridge—they think he fell over the parapet and struck his head against a pier. The body's in the mortuary, Mr. Grice—if you'd step across . . ."

Grice stepped across, and presently stood looking at John Flapp, carefully laid out and colder than the slab on which he lay. He made a mechanical reply to the police questions and presently went away, wondering. Would Carsdale tell him anything?

Carsdale told Grice nothing. And Grice told Carsdale nothing—at any rate as regards his encounter with Flapp at the Barleycorn. But he did tell him what the policeman had told him, and that he had seen the man's dead body at the mortuary, and having told him that much he waited to hear what he would say. Carsdale said little.

"Only to be expected, Grice," remarked Carsdale, with a sardonic smile. "At least, nothing to be surprised about. The fellow was on the drink, and I suppose he fell off the towing-path into the canal. Of course there'll be an inquest."

Grice knew that well enough, and he looked forward to it. He remembered what the policeman had said, that another policeman had directed Flapp to the office in Episcopus Lane. That would come out. And the coroner would want to know why the dead man went to Knyvett and Raper's, as the business was still commonly called in Wrychester, and what he did there—Carsdale would have to answer that little question. His conclusions on this point were correct; during the day Carsdale was duly summoned to the inquest next morning, and thither Grice accompanied him, expectant.

But Grice got no satisfaction for his curiosity. The proceedings were as dull, lifeless and ordinary as could be. Flapp's brother from London turned up and said he knew that John was expected home and had probably landed at Southampton the day before he was seen in Wrychester; he himself had not seen him for many years, but he identified him easily. The landlord of the Barleycorn said that Flapp left his house at ten o'clock; he had taken several glasses of rum during the evening, but he seemed sober and in full command of himself. The doctor said Flapp had met his death by drowning, and in his opinion he had fallen over the low parapet of a bridge and severely injured his head by concussion with the stone masonry below before striking the water. All this was good evidence, but poor hearing—for Grice. He waited to hear what Carsdale had to say, and he got his chance when the coroner put a direct question to the solicitor.

"What business had he at your office, Mr. Carsdale?"

Carsdale smiled and spoke straight out.

"None! If he wanted anything, it was to gossip. He was



The room had been ransacked from top to bottom. Evidently the murderer had spent hours in the room after committing his crime.

certainly under the influence of liquor. He told me he had been brought up in Wrychester and that a brother of his had been employed by my predecessors, Knyvett and Raper, and that he'd just called in to say how d'ye do and talk of old times. He said he'd been all over the world, and especially in South America, had made a lot of money and had now come home and was taking a look round Wrychester before going on to his brother in London. I humored him and talked to him—but he had no business."

"Ah, a very simple case!" observed the coroner, and turned to his jury. "No difficulty about finding a verdict here, gentlemen . . ."

Grice listened and said nothing. But he knew that of all the

men in that court he was the only one who, had he liked, could have introduced sensation, excitement, suspicion into the atmosphere by standing up and saying a few words. He was not going to do it; his motives were otherwise; he was going to watch Carsdale. He had always known Carsdale to be one of those men who will sail as near the wind as ever they can safely get; now he knew him to be a liar.

Flapp had left something with Carsdale; something of value; something that meant money, golden money, as Flapp had phrased it; and Carsdale, believing that nobody knew anything about it, and ignorant that his clerk had met Flapp at the Barley-corn, meant to keep the thing for himself. He was a needy man, Carsdale; Grice knew that well enough. (Continued on page 110)

By
Bruno
Lessing

The Wooing of Lindl



"DO NOT drink from one cup with thine eye fastened on another!"

Thus saith the Talmud. And when the Talmud saith a thing it is exceedingly wise to give heed to it. For the Talmud usually saith a mouthful.

Lapidowitz sat in Milken's coffee house, thinking. That is to say, he thought he was thinking. There is very little real thinking going on in this vale of tears; most of us think that we are thinking when we are merely rummaging through the memory closet of our brain. A catalogue of the idle fancies that ran through Lapidowitz's mind would have run something like this:

"I wish I could make some money. If I don't get some money pretty soon I'll have to go to work. It's terrible to work. I wish I had a new silk hat. I hate that fellow Rosenheim. He has it easy. That Malakoff is a nice fellow. I wish he would come in. Maybe he will lend me a couple of dollars. If I was rich I would buy an automobile and ride around all day long. I need a new suit, too. That Lindl ain't got such a bad figure. Too bad she's so poor and so dumb!"

As these precious cerebrations were following one another through Lapidowitz's brain, Lindl was patiently scrubbing the floor of Milken's coffee house.

The occupation of floor scrubbing hardly sets off a woman's attractions to the best advantage. Yet Lindl was rather good-looking, in a way, well formed—on somewhat buxom lines—and bubbling over with health and good nature. Usually, when she scrubbed the floor or scoured the marble tops of the tables, she hummed a tune. It was always a weird, unrecognizable tune that reminded you of the Balkan states and people in comic opera costumes.

"That fellow Rosenheim" and "that Malakoff" were both habitués of Milken's coffee house. They came there almost every afternoon for their black coffee and slivovitz. Both were in the shoe business, Rosenheim as a jobber and Malakoff as a manufacturer. They had known each other for over twenty years. When they were on good terms with each other, they sat at the same table; when they had quarreled they kept as far apart as the confines of the room permitted. They quarreled and made up, on an average, once a week. The "madness" and "gladness" of Rosenheim and Malakoff were an integral part of the life of the coffee house.

No one ever discovered the cause of their frequent disagreements and neither of the two ever discussed the matter with the other habitués of the place. The onlookers who, despite their

complete ignorance of the nature of these quarrels, insisted upon acting as umpires, invariably blamed Rosenheim. Their attitude is best reflected in Lapidowitz's weekly appeal to Malakoff:

"I see you got another 'mad on' with that fellow Rosenheim," the *schnorrer* would always begin. "I don't know what it's about but I'll bet you he's all wrong. A fellow with such a sour face what he got and what never has a good word for nobody, he's sure to be in wrong. But a gentleman what's always good-natured and cheerful like you—say, by the way, Mr. Malakoff, could you let me have a couple of dollars on my I. O. U.?"

Lindl, after circling half the room, had begun to work her way backward, crab-like and thus it happened that, unintentionally, her ample proportions collided with the back of Lapidowitz's chair.

"It's all right, Lindl," said Lapidowitz, shifting his chair. "You don't got to apologize. I know you didn't do it on purpose. Go right ahead. You ain't looking so good, today, Lindl. Sort of pale-ish. Did your beau go back on you?"

Lindl raised herself upon her knees and smiled. She brushed a wisp of hair from her perspiring face. It was easy to see that all her heart had warmed at a friendly word. And thus spoke Lindl:

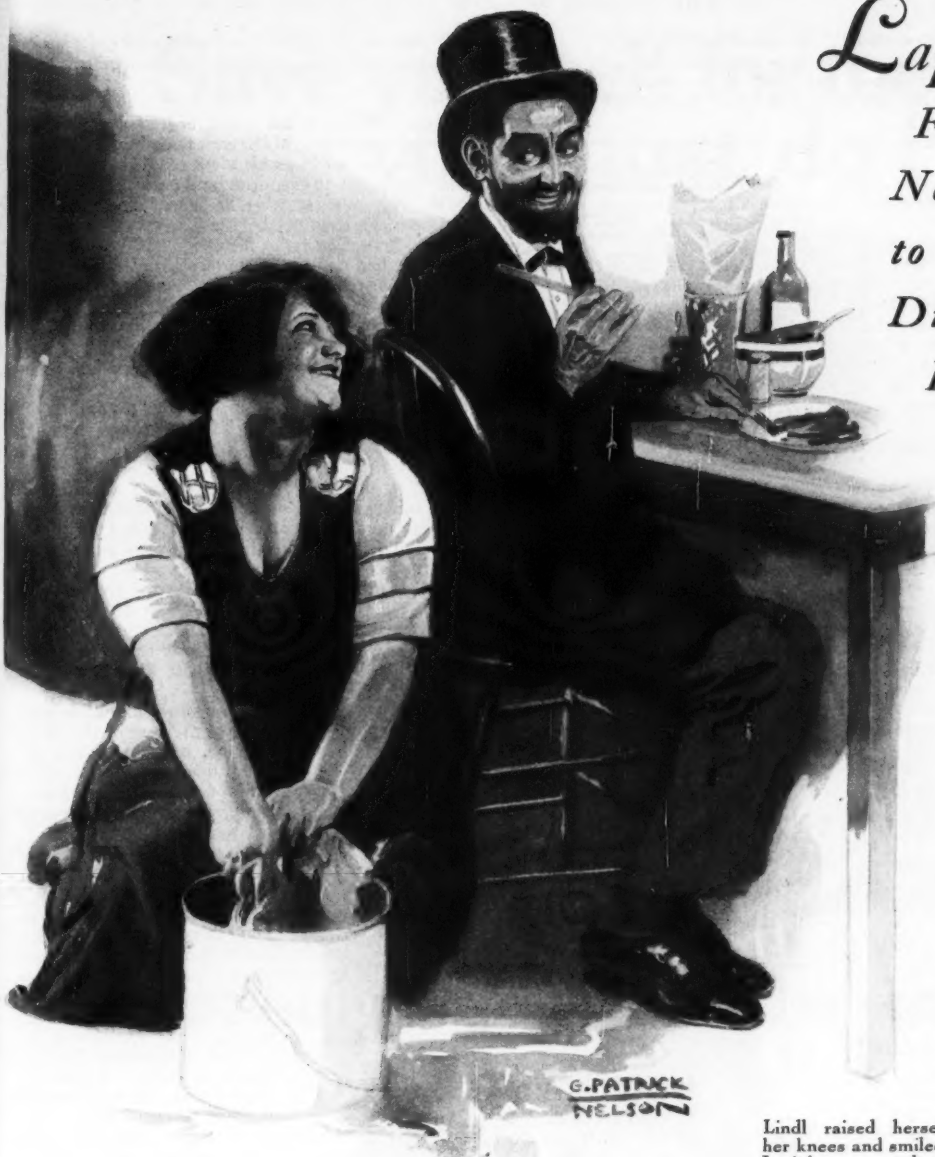
"Oh, I ain't got any beau. You know that, Mr. Lapidowitz. Only Max out in the kitchen who is too fresh. But I didn't sleep for two nights. My uncle is sick and my sister Mirma she is all worn out sitting up with him and she made me come around and take her place and I got to give him his medicine and everything and didn't get a minute's sleep all night long for two nights just thinking of it and I got to do my work regular just the same because you know how Mr. Milken is and he's never been nice to me, my uncle I mean, only to Mirma but just the same if he dies Max says I'm pretty sure to get something because he's got plenty of money. Mirma says two tenement houses but just the same a girl got to work for her living and—"

During this ramble Lapidowitz saw Malakoff enter the coffee house and seat himself as far away from Rosenheim as he could get. He heard what the girl was saying—that is to say, the mechanical portion of his brain recorded the sounds that issued from her lips. But now, without word of apology or explanation, he sprang to his feet and made his way towards Malakoff, leaving Lindl upon her knees.

"Hello, Mr. Malakoff," he cried, cheerfully. "I see you got a mad on with that fellow Rosenheim. I don't know what it's about, but—"

Lapidowitz

Finds a New Way to Turn a Dishonest Penny



*Illustration
by
G. Patrick
Nelson*

Lindl raised herself upon her knees and smiled. "Oh, I ain't got any beau. You know that, Mr. Lapidowitz."

"Here's a dollar," said Malakoff. "Just write out a I. O. U. and give it to me."

Yes, Malakoff always insisted upon an I. O. U. Which pleased Lapidowitz immensely. Because Lapidowitz was perfectly willing to write I. O. U's all day long. And the *schnorrer* left the coffee house without giving Lindl another thought. Until, in the "stilly watches of the night," during a sleepless interlude, the mechanical portion of Lapidowitz's brain emitted some of the sounds that had come from the girl's lips and brought them to his consciousness.

"What in the devil was it that Lindl said about her sick uncle having two tenement houses?" he wondered. "I got to ask her."

It was the idle hour of the day. Rosenheim, the shoe jobber, was the only customer. He looked up from his newspaper when Lapidowitz entered, stared at him for a moment and then went on reading. Lindl was scrubbing the floor.

"What was you telling me about your uncle, yesterday?" asked Lapidowitz, standing over the kneeling girl. "I had a lot of business on my mind and wasn't listening. You said something about tenement houses."

Lindl paused in her work and smiled. Lindl was always willing to pause in her work and was always willing to talk.

"My sister Mirma says he got two tenements but I don't know nothing about it only he never works and ain't got any business and the doctors and medicine must cost something terrible but I guess Mirma knows what she's talking about and Max says if there is anything coming I ought to get a part of it but I don't care so much about that only it ain't right that I got to keep on working so hard when I got an uncle what——"

"Look here, Lindl," said Lapidowitz. "Have you got a nice dress to wear? I mean to go out with at night. Because I want to take you to supper tomorrow night—I know a place where they got good fish with raisin sauce and I want to have a talk with you. This ain't no kind of work for a girl like you."

Lindl gazed at him with swimming eyes.

"I got a blue dress with black braids running down on the sides and gold buttons and ribbons and a waist what goes with it got lace around the neck what I brought from the old country and fancy work in the front with embroidery on it and——"

"Yes," interrupted Lapidowitz, "that dress will do. Now, when you get through tomorrow, about six o'clock, walk down the street and I'll be waiting for you."

Lindl nodded. Lapidowitz hung around for half an hour, hoping that Malakoff would drop in and then, deciding that he would not appear that day, approached Rosenheim.

"How do you do, Mr. Rosenheim?" he asked ingratiatingly. "You look like you was only twenty-five years old today." Rosenheim laid down his newspaper and stared at the *schnorrer*.

I never lent anybody a cent in my life," he said. Lapidowitz felt his temper rising.

"I'll bet you didn't," he retorted. "Why, if your best friend was dying—"

"But," interrupted the shoe jobber, "if you'd like to earn a little money I got a job for you." Lapidowitz felt his temper subsiding.

"I always said, Mr. Rosenheim—" he began.

"Never mind what you said or what you didn't said. I got four rooms in my place filled with shoes what ain't in boxes. Last week I bought several thousand boxes: If you'll put all them shoes in them boxes and them boxes in the basement, I'll give you a hundred dollars. If you work hard you can do it in four weeks—that's twenty-five dollars a week. If you're lazy, maybe it'll take you a year. But you don't get a cent till the last pair of shoes is in the last box, down in the basement. And you can take it or leave it."

Lapidowitz rose proudly and buttoned his coat.

"I take it," he said.

It would be difficult to imagine a more prosaic or dreary task than that of packing shoes into boxes all the live-long day. Lapidowitz was alone in the vast store-room with not a soul to talk to. After a few hours he even grew weary of whistling to keep his spirits up. It was the dulllest work he had ever undertaken in his life. One pair of shoes looked exactly like another, the boxes were all alike, everything about the task was monotonous.

Before the day was ended Lapidowitz was tempted to throw up the job but when he gazed upon the pile of boxes that he had already packed and realized that, in case he quit, his labor had been lost, he murmured a few curses and went on with his work.

That evening he was surprised to find Malakoff supping at Milken's.

"This is a great surprise," said the *schnorrer*. "It's the first time I ever seen you here except at lunch time."

"Oh, I just dropped in," said the shoe manufacturer. "I hear you're working by that fellow Rosenheim. How are you getting along?"

"Rotten," replied Lapidowitz. "He got a heart like a rock. I noticed today you got a mad on with him and I bet it's all his fault. Which reminds me I got an engagement tomorrow and if you—"

"Make out a I. O. U. for two dollars," said Malakoff, taking a roll of bills from his pocket. "And by the way, did you notice many number sevens among them shoes that you're packing?"

"I didn't notice any numbers at all," said Lapidowitz, wearily, as he signed his I. O. U. "Just a lot of shoes what looked all alike to me. And my back is nearly broke from stooping down."

"Well," remarked Malakoff, carefully placing the I. O. U. in his card-case, "you just take notice how many number sevens he got. I just got a curiosity to find out. And if you let me know every day how you're gettin' along, well, you know me—I'm always willing to make a little loan to help a fellow out."

So, from that time on, in addition to the drudgery of packing shoes in boxes, Lapidowitz kept count of those that were marked "No. 7."

Neither his best friend nor his worst enemy ever accused Lapidowitz of being fastidious. Matters of taste rarely bothered him; he looked upon the world as his victim and asked nothing more of life than to be able to eat, drink and enjoy himself without paying for it. Nevertheless, when he beheld Lindl, punctual for her appointment, he shuddered. Lindl's description of her best dress had been honest, as far as it went but had hardly been comprehensive. She had omitted seven or eight colors and, perhaps, half a dozen indescribable trimmings.

"Lindl," said Lapidowitz, quickly, "the restaurant is right around the corner, on your left. Go in and sit down and I'll be with you right away. I got to stop and see a man."

He stood still until she had turned the corner and then, leisurely, he followed her.

"Lindl," he said, when he joined her in the restaurant, "I didn't know your Sunday dress was such a fancy thing. You got to dress plainer in a big city like New York unless you go on the stage."

"That's funny," said Lindl, "my sister Mirma she said the same thing. She said as soon as she laid eyes on this dress it was made for the stage and she wondered why I didn't go to the Yiddish Theater and get a job there because it pays much better than Milken's although there is places where you get paid much better for cleaning and helping with the dishes and get a day off once in while but I like the stage and maybe, some day—"

"You better look at the bill-of-fare first, Lindl," said Lapidowitz, "and order some of that fish with raisin sauce."

When the order had been given Lapidowitz lit a cigaret and smiled genially at the young woman.

"You know, Lindl," he said, "you're the kind of girl I like. A good, sensible, honest girl what doesn't order a whole bill-of-fare and try to boss a man. I bet you and me could get together fine."

"I was just telling Max," said Lindl, "only the other day that you got to be careful what you eat in restaurants unless you can go in the kitchen and see if the floor is clean and everything is *kosher* because lots of people ain't a bit particular and even in Milken's once I—"

"Now about them two tenement houses," Lapidowitz interrupted. "D'ye think your uncle is going to die?"

"Oh, sure," replied Lindl. "He's terribly bad. Mirma says he don't eat anything at all and Max got worried and went around to see the doctor and he said if uncle didn't eat he couldn't live but I don't know what to do about it because I'm his niece just as much as Mirma is and I wasted a lot of time giving him his medicine. Mirma said he didn't make any will and if—"

"Look here, Lindl," broke in Lapidowitz, "d'ye think I'm a bad looking fellow?"

"Oh, Mr. Lapidowitz!" exclaimed Lindl, with a smirk. "What a question! Only the other day I was telling Max how funny it was that you didn't get married because, the way I think, every man ought to get married and have a wife to look after him because no man knows how to sew buttons on and take car

A Laugh With England's Most Popular Humorist George Belcher



FIRST GENTLEMAN: My missus is the limit. She's always askin' for money, mornin', noon and night.

SECOND GENTLEMAN: Wot does she do with it all?

FIRST GENTLEMAN: Well, I ain't give her any yet.



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You re-saved the work and worry,
With Campbell's fine sit down to dine—
It's ready in a hurry!



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Our spotless kitchens are famous, our zeal for none but the best ingredients is known by women everywhere. Our service is right at your elbow—at the nearest grocer's.

Marketing, selecting, preparing, blending—all for the benefit of women who take scrupulous pride in their tables and will have only the best food.

Taste it today—in Campbell's Vegetable Soup!

12 cents a can

LUNCHEON

DINNER

SUPPER

Campbell's SOUPS

of his clothes because it's something terrible the way the tailors charge for doing just the littlest thing to a coat or vest because Mirra says when she sends uncle's suit to the tailor they always—"

"The kind of girl I'd like to marry," said Lapidowitz, calmly, "is a girl like you with a tenement house."

"Oh, Mr. Lapidowitz," the girl protested. "How you talk! I'm only a poor working girl. I was telling Max only the other day what a shame it is that some people got to work so hard while others ain't got nothing to do except to have a good time but Max says he's going to take me to theater some night when we're both off because when I'm off he usually has to work and when he's off—"

"Never mind about Max," said Lapidowitz. "When the right time comes I'll take you to a theater. The first thing you got to do now is to see a lawyer what will look after your interests so that your sister don't get away with anything. Now I got a friend what's a A number 1 lawyer and he won't charge nothing, either, until you get your tenement house. But anyway, Lindl, you certainly got a fine pair of eyes. And the next time you go out with me just wear a plain black dress without all them colors."

Day after day Lapidowitz packed shoes into boxes and made a note of all that were marked "Number 7." Several times he approached his employer with a request for a portion of his pay in advance. But Rosenheim was adamant.

"When the job is finished and the last pair of shoes is in the last box, you get your money," he said. "Not a day sooner and not a penny in advance. If you quit and leave only one pair of shoes out of a box you don't get a cent. That's our bargain. Take it or break it."

Rosenheim and Malakoff had become "glad" again and Lapidowitz on several occasions was unable to approach the latter. Toward the end of the second week of his work, however, he found him alone.

"That fellow Rosenheim," he began, but Malakoff interrupted him.

"You don't need to count any more sevens," he said. "Make out a I.O.U. for five dollars and I'll let you have it. That's the kind of a man what I am." He bestowed a pleasant wink upon the *schnorrer*.

"You're what I call a real gentleman," said Lapidowitz. "That fellow Rosenheim ain't good enough to shine your shoes."

In spite of Malakoff's suggestion Lapidowitz kept count of the "number sevens" for the next few days in order to show his zeal and his appreciation of the manufacturer's kindness. But Malakoff did not appear in Milken's nor did Lapidowitz see him again until his task of counting shoes was finished.

Once he said to Rosenheim, "I didn't seen

your friend Mr. Malakoff around here for several days. I hope he ain't sick."

"I hope so, too," said Rosenheim, but vouchsafed nothing more.

But the task finally came to an end. The last shoe had been packed into the last box and then, with a chuckle, Lapidowitz placed the box upon the floor and kicked it.

"There, Mr. Rosenheim," he muttered, "is the end of your dirty work. And now you're going to give me my hundred dollars and then I'm going to tell you what I think of you."

There are moments in life that stand out in our memory as more eventful and epochal than any stretch of years that preceded or followed them. Such a moment came now in the life of Lapidowitz. As he entered the office of the shoe establishment he was amazed to behold Malakoff sitting in Rosenheim's chair at Rosenheim's desk. Yes, his friend Malakoff of Milken's Café, beyond all doubt. The same features, the same clothes—and yet, could it be Malakoff? The Malakoff that he remembered had always smiled pleasantly upon the *schnorrer* and had greeted him cheerfully. This individual, however, was glaring at him, with frowning brow and an expression of disapproval.

"Why, if it ain't Mr. Malakoff!" exclaimed Lapidowitz, ingratiatingly. "My! I was afraid you was sick. Only the other day I was saying to that fellow Rosenheim—"

"I wasn't sick and I ain't sick," said Malakoff. "I bought this place from Mr. Rosenheim and just now I'm very busy. What d'ye want? I ain't lending any more money."

"You bought this place?" exclaimed Lapidowitz, in amazement.

"I don't know if it's any of your business," said Malakoff, "but that's what I said. Now what d'ye want? I'm very busy."

Lapidowitz drew himself to his full height. "Oh, if that's the case," he replied loftily, "I'll talk business. I made a bargain with that fellow Rosenheim to pack his shoes in boxes. I packed more than a hundred million pairs of shoes and he owes me a hundred dollars. If you took over his business you took over his bargains. I want my money."

"Yes," said Malakoff, rising, "he told me about that."

He opened the door of a small safe in the corner of the room, took out a large envelope and held it out to Lapidowitz.

"Here is your I.O.U. for one hundred and twelve dollars," he said. "Now we're square. I'm giving you the twelve dollars for good luck and because I know you'd never pay them anyway. Now go away. I'm busy."

Lapidowitz stared blankly at the heap of I.O.U.'s. His lips moved but no sound came from them. He gulped several times and

swallowed a number of lumps that had suddenly come to his throat.

"Mr. Malakoff," he began.

"Come! Come! I ain't got no time to talk now. Get out. You done your work and you got your pay. I'm busy."

Lapidowitz crumpled the I.O.U.'s into a tight mass and walked slowly toward the door. He then turned and confronted the shoe merchant.

"All I got to say," he cried, "is that the dirtiest loafer in the United States is a *gonif* by the name of Malakoff."

Then, without even going to the trouble of destroying them, he flung the mass of his acknowledged indebtedness at Malakoff's feet and strode out of the place. If there had been an I.O.U. for a million dollars among those slips of paper, it would not have made the slightest difference to Lapidowitz.

He went to Milken's Café and asked for Lindl. He found that she had been sent on an errand and he seated himself at a table to wait for her. The only other occupant of the room was a little, old man of pale countenance and shriveled features who was eating goulash at an adjoining table. For a moment Lapidowitz forgot his woe in watching this customer eat. He held his face close to the plate and stuffed the food into his mouth with amazing rapidity.

"He must be nearly starved," thought Lapidowitz. And then he heard a scream. Turning swiftly he beheld Lindl. She had dropped a number of packages upon the floor and stood, as if spell-bound, gazing at the old man.

"UNCLE!" she cried. The old man looked up and waved his arm.

"Go away!" he said, in a squeaky voice. "You and Mirra were trying to starve me. Tell them to bring me some more goulash."

Lapidowitz approached the girl.

"Is that your uncle what was dying?" he asked. Lindl nodded.

"He shouldn't have left the house," said she. "He'll kill himself eating like that."

Lapidowitz gazed upon the old man and watched him sop up the last drop of gravy on his plate with a crust of bread. Then, sadly shaking his head, he started for the door.

"Oh, Mr. Lapidowitz," said Lindl, in a low voice, "I couldn't wear my black dress because there is a rip in the sleeve what shows and it wouldn't look good in a theater but I'm getting a new one made of dark red with yellow in the collar around the neck and Mirra is helping me with it but it won't be ready until next week. Will that be time enough?"

Lapidowitz stared at her. Then, with a sigh, he nodded his head.

"Yes, Lindl," he said, "next week will be time enough. So will next year."

"Take the cash and let the credit go" is Lapidowitz's motto, and he tries to live up to it in Bruno Lessing's mirthful story for the next COSMOPOLITAN.

Nobody Sees the Waiter's Face

(Continued from page 31)

drinks and poker parties. Wouldn't you like to have some of your old friends back?"

He put his temples in his hands. He groaned like a scolded schoolboy.

"You see how it is. We go this place and that place, trying to get away from—well, memories. But they go along with us; they follow us and they won't let us forget, ever. And then when we're all tired out from ragging around we come back to this. It never can be anything else but this for you, either, so long as you're tied to me. Oh, why don't you chuck the whole miserable game and go it singly awhile?"

"Dot," he said steadily, "I couldn't do that even if I wanted to. You might not think it, but I've still got a few scraps of my self-respect left. You might go as far as to call

it my honor, if you weren't afraid of making a joke. I've got to stick to the end of our little chapter. On my own account I've got to stick and on yours, too. We've both got to stick. And I'll tell you why we've got to."

"But—"

"Dot, some writing guy or other said it all. He said any man could get a divorce—except a bachelor."

And after that for a long minute or so nothing more was said.

"Let's go home," he suggested then, and got up from where he sat. "We don't want to stick here any longer—I'd call this supper a failure up to the present stage. Let's go home out of all this jam and hullabalooing. You're played out. I think what you need is a little

run down to Palm Beach. We'll talk it over on the way uptown."

"Home?" She echoed it flatly. "Home to a place like ours?"

"Well, Dot," he said, "it's all the home we've got and we might as well call it that. And it's costing us ten thousand a year, that flat. And it's got everything in it that you could think of. Anyhow, it's got everything in it that money can buy; I'll put it that way. Come on, now, I told Savage to have the car waiting around the corner in Forty-ninth Street."

"I'll go."

She rose and caught up her cloak and with a casting movement huddled it over her bare shoulders. A fold of the shimmering garment



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THE GOLDEN BAR WITH THE CLEAN NAPTHA ODOR.

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whipped the waiter's nearby shoulder, but she did not see him; she scarcely sensed his dingy presence. He appeared to have a perfect genius for self-effacement, that waiter. Then, not staying for her yoke-fellow, she passed out.

The man felt a soft brushing against him from behind.

"Oh," he said, absently, and then, realizing that his spread-out ulster was being held up for him by this so unobtrusive yet so thoughtful a survivor: "Oh, thanks."

He fumbled rearward with his arms to find the armholes and reached up for his hat and muffler. "I won't wait for the check," he said, wadding the muffler about his throat. "Tell Dan to mail the bill to me. He'll know."

He parted the curtains but hesitated, apparently the least bit confused. "Oh," he said for the third time, "I knew I was about to forget something." He drew a bill from a trouser-pocket and flipped it, crumpled, on the nearest corner of the disordered table. Then as he, too, departed without a backward glance, he said something to himself under his breath:

"God Almighty!"

That was all he said, just those two words, but even so they made a prayer and they made a curse.

The babble among the diners took a higher, more dining key. They who had been watching the old year out were in active rehearsal of whooping the young year in. Shortly ahead of the event, in came the ever-vigilant Captain Slack, with the stiff hairs on the back of his neck all bristling.

"What's gone wrong here, Jackson?" he grumbled, his eyes flitting from spot to spot and taking inventory. "What's the reason that gentleman and his lady should be runnin' away and their supper not half ate?"

"I should say that the pleasures of this establishment palled on them," answered the extra. His tone was crisp and precise.

"You should say?" Slack focussed a glare on the suspect. "And who are you that you should be sayin'—"

He let the sentence die unfinished. He stared the harder and as he stared his hackles dropped. He saw a transformation taking place. It must have started before he returned here; it was progressing under his startled and mystified view. The meek and shaky culprit who so readily would cringe and shrink in and abase himself before a blast of fault-finding was vanishing; indeed already had vanished.

In that stead stood one of a different sort who, for all those pouched underjaws of his and his gargoyles' puffy throat and the monstrous bulge at his girth and the grotesque wreckage out of a junkman's wardrobe which he wore upon his body to clothe him, yet could put on some shape and port of good dignity. What was now by quick processes emerging still remained a down-dale man; that must be conceded; but for the first time, to this spectator's knowledge, the other had the up-hill look upon him, like one who faces an exalted eastward slope toward the sunrise. He ceased to be a living rummage-bag; he became an indubitable fellow-being and, as was patent, must be dealt with as such.

Captain Slack was above the ranks and valued himself accordingly. He scarcely could permit himself to be impressed by occurring changes, however unexpected, in any slow-footed limpy outcast of a dinner bum, whomsoever. But, with no loss of prestige, without surrendering his perquisites of superiority and patronage, he could admit surprise.

"Well, Jackson," he stated, "you do seem to have taken a bit of a brace on yourself, all of a rush, someway."

"It's only temporary," said the underling. "But I'll not deny it's agreeable while the sensation lasts," and smacked his pulpy lips on it as though the very taste of the thought was agreeable. "I'd almost forgotten the feel of it—was out of the habit. It comes back, though. It's curious how it comes back!"

He straightened, engaging Slack's eye with his own.

"Only a little while ago," he said, "you were so kind as to suggest it was barely possible that I had not always been what I am now. Well, you were right about it—dead right. Seeing me now and seeing me as I was some five or six years ago you'd never know me. Nobody would, I expect. Perhaps you won't credit it but it's a fact, that I was in good shape—physically, I mean. Why, man alive, I was an athlete then—went in for sports. Lately I've confined myself largely to one sport—you'll know the one I mean"—he crooked a glistening elbow upward—"and a pretty sorry sport it is. To get in condition for that you have to get out of condition for everything else. And I have. I was in business, too, and doing well in an office downtown. I thought I had a lot to live for. Why, I hardly had a gray hair in my head. Now look at it."

"A clerk, maybe?" inquired the hearer, fascinated in spite of himself and apprehending some bigger disclosure still in store. Had the building caught fire he couldn't have torn himself away.

"Well, there were clerks there—quite a number of them." The man spoke drily. "But all at once, over-night as you might say, my grip sort of slipped. I let go all holds—went to pieces. Behold the pieces, Captain Daniel Slack!"

"What happened to you?" demanded his confessor. "Say," the discovery jolted him—"say, you talk educated and all!"

"I'm just coming to that—we'll be there in a minute. I'll ask you a question: Are you married? Have you a wife living?"

"Oh, ho, I'm beginnin' to see what you're drivin' at!" Those two eloquent eyebrows of Slack's were twin accent marks above his words. "Yes, I've a wife—and a family. What of it?"

"Well, I had a wife, too. And I was fond of her. You might go so far as to say that I was in love with her. And she threw me down—with some outside assistance. My best friend took her away from me. She quit me and went to live with him. Now you've got me and my little story in a nutshell. But the nut is wormy. And the shell is battered, as you will observe. Here's another question: Slack—supposing a case—if a pal of yours stole your wife from you what would you do about it?"

"It wouldn't happen."

"But if it did?"

"Well, if it—but it wouldn't, mind you—I'd take a gun in me two hands and I'd croak the both of them and call it a blessed good job, I would so."

"Would you? Well, I thought of that. A thousand times—yes, a million times—I've thought of that. I've never stopped thinking of it since that—that thing I'm telling you about happened to me. I've lain awake nights on my bed over yonder in a lousy lodging house on Eighth Avenue and pictured how I'd shoot them down and send them to hell—first him, then her—*bang! bang!*—like that. I've hunched up on a park bench by the hour and rehearsed it. I used to think I was weak—a damned coward—because I didn't go and do it. But, oh, man, man, listen to me! I've found a better way to get even than that. I just now found it. I'm having the sweetest revenge a man ever had. I'm going to go on having it. Do you know what I'm going to do to them? I'll tell you. I've got to tell somebody."

All the jerk and jump and palsy had gone out of his hands, magically. He aimed a finger that was as rigid as a revolver barrel at Slack. "I'm going to let them have their hell on earth awhile longer. I'm going to let them go on living—that's their hell, that's my revenge!"

"But still I don't get you, quite, sir?" The "Sir" slipped from the bemazed and puzzled Slack unawares. "What's come over you tonight that you sh'd get this notion so sudden-like?"

"My fault. I should have mentioned it sooner. You see, I've just been serving them."

"God's sake, servin' who?"

"Why, my wife and my best friend. It was more than a supper-party for two that was spread in this private dining-room tonight. It was a family party for three, as you might say—a lady and her husband and her husband's closest, oldest friend."

The bewildered captain of waiters emerged part way out of his stroke of stupefaction.

"God's sake!" he gasped. "*Wheew!*" Like a bite out of a story-book! So that's why they beat it like the banshees was after them?"

"Not at all. They didn't know I was here."

"Didn't know—?"

"Didn't recognize me, I should say. Neither of them saw me—really saw me, I mean. Besides he said, among other true things which were said here tonight, that nobody ever sees the waiter's face. Why should they?"

"Well, of all the—!"

"Oh, everything was quite in order. You're to send a tab to him for the amount of the check; he mentioned that as he was leaving." The waiter's manner had become quieter, less uplifted. "And he left a tip behind, too. Well, he always was generous with his money. There it is." He advanced to the table and lifted the crushed bill from the cloth. "A five-spot. I suppose the regular arrangement prevails—fifty-fifty between us? Well, then, here goes for your share."

He tore the greenback squarely in two and pitched one piece of it on the cloth in his chief's direction.

"And here goes for mine!"

He tore his own half into many, many little fragments and briskly tossed the scraps aloft so that they showered down on everything, like stage snow, Slack looking on with goggled, astounded eyes. It is possible, though, that Slack had within him somewhere an aborted sense of drama which forbade his interrupting the scene just yet.

"He left something else behind," continued the speaker. "He left nearly half a bottle of his champagne—first rate champagne, too, I'd say. We'll exchange the compliments of the season in a foaming glass of the bubbly—what say, Slack?—and while so doing extend them to certain others, as well."

With an air of gaiety he drew the frosted bottle from the plated cooler alongside the table, and, ranging two glasses, filled them both quite up to their brims, then slipped the stem of one into Slack's grasp, the latter's fingers closing on it mechanically, and raised the second glass to the level of his own eyes.

"We'll drink a little toast, if you please," he announced. "We'll drink to our late guests—my wife and my best friend. No—!" He paused listening. "Wait a minute. Ah, I thought so—there it goes!"

New York's factory whistles, New York's steam engines, New York's rattlers and fire-sirens and tin horns and church bells were off on the stroke—blaring, blasting, chiming, bleating, buzzing, dinging and donging and shrieking together. The mighty racket shook the walls of the building and came through the walls and mingled with the exultant yellings of men and women all over the restaurant.

The dinner bum spoke louder, to be heard above the din.

"Now isn't it appropriate," he said, "that midnight should come just as we raise our glasses? How well-timed everything has been tonight! How nicely everything has turned out!"

He bowed toward the still petrified, still muted captain of waiters.

"We'll drink to them! And there'll be no heel-taps, remember. We'll drink to the kind of New Year they're going to have together! And may they both live to have a hundred more like it! *Ah-h-h!*"

He drained his draft, flung the emptied goblet down so that it smashed on the floor at his feet and, with his ridiculous jacket bobbing its scanty tail behind him and his pendulous belly bouncing and quaking, rushed past his dazed confrère and out of the place.



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For Love or Money

(Continued from page 69)

were getting dressed, Mr. Cottrell, who, as you know, is disgustingly wealthy, telephoned from that farmhouse over there to the nearest town and an automobile is being sent out to take us the rest of the way to the city."

"There's something coming down the road now!"

"Something" was the correct description of the vehicle which arrived presently. It had once had four cylinders but apparently one or two of them had been removed and assigned to detached duty somewhere else. There were seats fore and aft, too, but the whole frame sagged perilously in the middle and most of the stuffing had oozed out of the upholstery. You could see the holes whence it had escaped.

"Just a real good car," the driver explained as he saw them examining it critically.

They made the first fifteen miles in one hour, flat. Two of the tires were in the same condition at the end of that time.

The garage where they happened to go for repairs owned a three passenger chummy roadster of an orphan make and George hired that, through Cass, of course, who was now operating the bank roll.

It was chummy all right—more than that, down-right *intime*, by the time the three passengers and the driver crowded in.

But they made fifty miles before the differential gear stripped itself and ground up a few cogs inside the housing.

"How long to get a new gear?" demanded Cass. They were stalled out of sight of everything, even a farmhouse.

"About three months," concluded the driver. "They don't manufacture parts for this bus any more and we'd have to build a new factory."

So they walked on in the general direction they had been headed until they were overtaken by a truck which carried them to the next town. There they hired an enclosed Dunningham about fifteen feet long which did the rest of the distance almost before the passengers could finish getting acquainted.

But the earlier vicissitudes had done a great deal towards breaking down the barriers of convention. Helga was not the kind of a girl who insisted upon many conventions anyway. If she liked people she liked 'em and there was no question but what she approved of and trusted the two young men who had adopted her and her problems as their own personal responsibility.

When they arrived in Chicago and were halted at the door of the Michigan Avenue hotel where Helga had decided to stay there was no doubt but that all the parties to this triangular friendship were loathe to see it break up.

"Can't we do something else for you?" asked George yearningly—he was hit the worse if anything. "Do you want a good bootlegger or theater seats or can we beat up anybody for you?"

The prospect appealed to Helga. "I certainly need a man who belongs to me——"

"I do—body and soul."

"Me, too."

"Thanks, I love a good liar."

"We're not. I vouch for Cass and he vouches for me."

"Would you really face danger for me?"

"Yes," with one breath.

"And haven't you anything particular to do today?"

"No."

"Then I'll call you up in half an hour. What hotel are you stopping at?"

The two young men looked at each other.

"This one," declared George without any hesitation.

"What a strange coincidence," mused Helga but she did not inquire too closely as to when they had made their decision to patronize that particular hostelry.

They assembled in solemn conclave over a combined breakfast and luncheon in the hotel café a short time later.

"Shucks," decided Helga after she had tried several times to invent a situation to account for the help she needed from them, "I might just as well tell you boys the truth. You've been so wonderful and so absolutely honest with me yourselves——"

The two men looked at each other swiftly. Was she kidding them?

"That I'm going to tell you exactly why I came to Chicago. I believe my secret will be safe with you."

They promised that it would be.

"As I see it," decided George at the conclusion of the story, "we've either got to pay this Hirshfield or half kill him, maybe a little more. If cash will do the trick Mr. Cottrell will be glad to furnish it. Won't you, George?"

Cass, thus prodded, arose manfully to the occasion. "All that I have is yours, mademoiselle. My coffers are——"

"We get you, Cræsus," George interrupted. "Personally I have nothing to offer but myself. Therefore it shall be my privilege to commit the murder for your sweet sake. Let's go."

They did. The first objective was the home of Mrs. Bruce Newton.

In a city of apartment houses, Mrs. Newton lived in a tiny cottage jammed in between two large buildings. There was quite a deep front yard and the cottage itself sat way back like a mountain shack in a canyon. It was a white house with cheerful, if conventional, green trim and shutters.

The men waited outside more or less in ambush while Helga went in under a flag of truce. A nice looking girl, not much older than herself, answered Helga's ring.

"I'd like to see Mrs. Newton."

"Won't you step in. I am Mrs. Newton."

Helga did step in because she was too dazed to do anything else. Mrs. Newton shattered all traditions. She was not dressed in a slinky negligée nor was she made up or smoking a cigaret. On the contrary she had on an apron over a house dress of modest gray and her face was slightly flushed from working over a kitchen stove. Another evidence of her occupation was a warm spicy fragrance that permeated the atmosphere—currant jelly in the making, a nice homey odor.

"You'll sit down, of course, Miss——" The lady of the house paused interrogatively. Helga answered mechanically, "Miss O'Hara."

"Fergus O'Hara's daughter?" Mrs. Newton exclaimed involuntarily.

It seemed as if she had an impulse to seize her visitor in her arms and kiss her but the movement, if there really had been any, had been halted at its very beginning.

"Yes. Fergus O'Hara's daughter," Helga admitted.

"Then he has told you about me and you have come to look me over for yourself. I'm sorry you don't approve, Miss O'Hara, because your father's regard means a great deal to me, has, in fact, been about the only thing that has kept me going during a period when I had lost all faith. Your father is one of the kindest men I ever knew."

"Yes, I know that. The thing I can't understand is how, if you ever really appreciated dad, you could possibly have betrayed him."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean how could you turn his letters over to your brother to use for purposes of blackmail?"

"But my dear girl, I have no brother, no relative of any sort except my three-year-old son, and no one has ever seen your father's letters to me save myself."

"You've kept them, haven't you?"

"Yes—in a locked drawer in my desk, though."

"See if they're all there now," said Helga. Mrs. Newton went to another part of the house and returned in a moment or two with a packet of letters.

"Some of them are gone," she admitted. "By reading them through I could tell exactly which ones because I know them by heart. But who could have taken them and why?"

"Just who is Edwin Hirshfield and when did you reject his proposal of marriage?"

"Why, Mr. Hirshfield used to have a room here. How did you know about him and especially about his proposing?"

Helga looked at Mrs. Newton with a long, questioning stare. The other woman met her gaze frankly without waver.

"Do you call yourself Bruce," Helga asked, "or was that your late husband's first name?"

"It's mine. Why?"

"It's a long story. Mine's Helga. Come on out into the kitchen, Bruce, and we'll talk while we finish up the jelly."

Outside in the street George and Cass grew slightly weary of inactivity. They would gladly have welcomed a distraction of any sort.

Therefore when a thick-set young man, aggressively clad in a gray greenish suit, turned in at the front gate both men started after him.

"Here," said George to Cass, "you wait outside. This bird belongs to me. Don't forget that in this triangle you represent the money while I am the apostle of bravery."

"Do you think you can handle him?"

"I could handle Dempsey himself if I thought it would get me anything with Helga O'Hara."

George was inside the gate himself now and he caught up with the stranger before he had crossed half the yard to the front doorstep.

"Hey," George hailed, "is your name Hirshfield?"

The other man halted and surveyed George truculently. "What business of yours is it what my name is?"

George was pretty snappy, too. "I happen to be making it my business. If your name is Hirshfield you can't go into that house." To prove it George crossed in front of the other man and stood on the walk between him and the house.

"The devil I can't."

Those were the fighting words that marked the cessation of formality and exchange of diplomatic messages. Thenceforward the dispute was a subject for the motion picture camera only. It was carried on without dialogue or subtitles of any sort.

Finally the other man knocked George down and stood over him ready to repeat the medicine if George showed any signs of getting up.

"No, my name ain't Hirshfield," he told George finally when the billionaire bachelor seemed to have no inclination to continue the party.

"Well, why in thunder didn't you say so in the first place?" It made George so confounded mad that he got up anyway and slammed the stranger so hard that the latter took the count—really.

George summoned Cass and they carried the unconscious man into the house. (It was just as well not to leave him outside to attract police attention.)

"What has happened?" asked Mrs. Newton when the ladies had surveyed the wreckage. "Who has killed Mr. Hawkins, the collector for the gas company?"

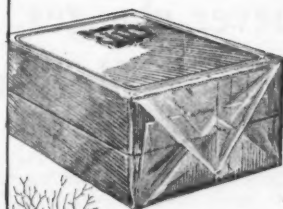
"He isn't dead," apologized George, looking at Helga. "I thought he was Hirshfield, ma'am."

"But Mr. Hirshfield is a very small man and not at all strong."

"Then you deserve a lot more credit for picking out a man who looks like a prize-fighter." Helga's illogical commendation made George swell up with a warm glow of



Although one of these women has light hair and the other has dark hair, they both have medium skins—so they are both buying the Naturelle shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder



Do you know how to choose your powder—and how to use it?

Women who get the best effects from their powder are as careful to choose the right shade of powder as they are to select becoming clothes.

MME. JEANNETTE

CLEVER women are clever in the way they use powder. They realize that the more they can make powder appear to be the natural finish of their skin, the more effective it becomes.

Powder must be applied with complete uniformity so that it looks like the delicate little finish we often see on the skin of beautiful children—it must be put on evenly. Also, it is of greatest importance to use the shade of powder that best matches your skin.

Pompeian Beauty Powder comes in the four shades that most nearly match the four typical skin tones of the women of America. These shades of powder are—Naturelle, Rachel, Flesh, and White. These are the four essential shades to obtain natural effects. In a general way, there are four distinct tones of skin found among American women—the medium, the very dark, the white, and the pink or flushed-looking skin. The following simplified explanation of typical skin-tones will prove a guide to women who are aware that their powder has always been too obvious.

Skin-tones—and shades of powder

The Medium skin varies in values and is sometimes hard to determine, for it is found with many combinations of hair and eye colorings. It is pleasantly warm in tone, with faint suggestions of old ivory, and fleeting suggestions of sun-kissed russet. The correct shade of

Pompeian Beauty Powder for this type of skin is the Naturelle shade.

The Milk White skin is quite without a trace of color except where the little blue veins show. Few American women have this very white, colorless skin, but these few are the only ones who should ever use white powder.

The Pink skin is most often found with blonde or reddish hair. As a woman grows older it is apt to deepen into a flushed-looking skin, and the result is a too-high coloring.

Women with this type of skin often make the mistake of using a white or dark powder, thinking to hide the pinkness. Pink or flesh-colored powder, however, should *always* be used on this skin—the flesh shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder will tone in with your skin and at the same time will tone down the pinkness.

The Olive skin is rich in its own color-tone, though it rarely shows much red or pink in the cheeks.

Women with this exquisite coloring should not try to disguise it with White or Flesh powder, but should enrich its beauty with the Rachel shade of Pompeian Beauty Powder.

Pompeian Beauty Powder has a quality of fineness that is due to its being sifted through silk. Its delicate consistency is a caress to a woman's skin. Its odor is delicate and elusive.

It is made in the Pompeian Laboratories—

"Don't Envy Beauty—Use Pompeian"

Pompeian
Beauty Powder

© 1925, The Pompeian Co.

the most hygienic and modern laboratories possible to build. Pompeian Beauty Powder, 60c (slightly higher in Canada).

The New Pompeian Powder Compact. This gracefully-proportioned compact is a slender disc of beauty—a size and shape that smart women approve and adopt for constant use.

Thousands of women will welcome the news that there is now available this delightful powder compacted in a new, smart refillable case. It is gold-finished with a delicate design traced in violet enamel. It is round, and fascinatingly thin. The mirror in the top covers the entire space to give ample reflection—and its lamb's wool puff has a satin top. Beauty Powder Compact, \$1.00. Pompeian Refills, 50c (slightly higher in Canada). At all toilet counters.

GET 1925 POMPEIAN PANEL AND FOUR SAMPLES

This new 1925 Pompeian Art Panel, "Beauty Gained is Love Retained," size 28 x 7 1/4. Done in color by a famous artist; worth at least 50c. We send it with samples of Pompeian Beauty Powder, Bloom, Day Cream and Night Cream for only 10c. With these samples you can make many interesting beauty experiments. Use coupon now.



(Top part shown)

Pompeian Laboratories,
2237 Payne Ave., Cleveland, O.

Gentlemen: I enclose 10c (dime preferred) for the new 1925 Pompeian Art Panel, "Beauty Gained is Love Retained," and the four samples.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Shade of face powder wanted? _____

A tobacco that never changes, deposits Mr. Bruce

Mr. Bruce doesn't know of the eternal vigilance that its makers exercise to keep "good old Edgeworth" unchanged in quality. But it is our conviction that a man buys the next tin of Edgeworth because he liked the one before it.

Therefore, it is up to us to see that he gets what he is trying to buy—"more of the same."

And Mr. Bruce is well qualified to testify on this point. He tells us that he averages better than half a tin a day, and he has been smoking Edgeworth for eight years.

Let's see—that's something like 1461 tins for Mr. Bruce, according to our office calculator. But Mr. Bruce's own letter will be more interesting than our comments. Here it is:

Savannah, Ga.

Messrs. Larus and Bro. Co.
Richmond, Va.

Gentlemen:

I have been using Edgeworth since 1916 and think it is the best pipe tobacco on the market. The flavor and aroma are distinctive; the quality, being the very best, never changes; and as I have smoked nearly every brand of pipe tobacco made, I have never found its equal.

My pipe is in my mouth nearly every hour of the day, and I smoke continually, using a can in less than two days, but have never felt any bad effects from Edgeworth.

I have the best smoking combination there is—a can of Edgeworth and a B B B curve stem—and these two friends, having been with me for eight years, are going to be with me as long as I live.

Wishing you and Edgeworth the best of success, I remain,
Yours very truly,
(signed), F. K. Bruce,
705 East 39th St.

Let us send you free samples of Edgeworth so that you may put it to the pipe test.

Write your name and address to Larus & Brother Company, 41 South 21st Street, Richmond, Va.

Edgeworth is sold in various sizes to suit the needs and means of all purchasers. Both Edgeworth Plug Slice and Ready-Rubbed are packed in small, pocket-size packages, in handsome humidor holding a pound, and also in several handy in-between sizes.

We'll be grateful for the name and address of your tobacco dealer, too, if you care to add them.

To Retail Tobacco Merchants: If your jobber cannot supply you with Edgeworth, Larus & Brother Company will gladly send you prepaid by parcel post a one- or two-dozen carton of any size of Edgeworth Plug Slice or Ready-Rubbed for the same price you would pay the jobber.



pride that rendered negligible the pain of a swollen jaw and a rapidly closing left eye.

Cass, realizing that he was losing ground, got Helga to one side. "How are things going? Am I to be allowed to buy off this demi-vamp for you?"

Helga laughed a little. "No. I've just discovered she isn't."

"What can I do to be of service to you?" he asked wistfully.

"You can send a telegram for me if you think you can find an office."

"I'll find one."

Helga sat down at the kitchen table and wrote on the back of a laundry list with a stub of a pencil:

MR. FERGUS O'HARA, RIVIERE, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

HAVE DECIDED BEST SOLUTION IS FOR US TO MARRY BRUCE SHE IS A PEACH BRING MY BEST DRESS AND COME AT ONCE.

HELGA

She considered the telegram thoughtfully and then handed it to Cass. "While you're out you might as well call up Mr. Hirshfield at his office and invite him to the wedding which he arranged. You might tell him, though, before he accepts definitely that my dad has a curious habit of carrying a gun in every hip pocket he owns including his pajamas."

At the wedding, George and Cass, their identities still scrambled, were very much under foot.

They helped with everything except dressing the bride and she wouldn't have minded much if they had done that. Because Bruce, with her lovely generosity, was vaguely troubled at the unhappiness that was bound to be in store for one of Helga's suitors.

It was a wonderful wedding—nobody there but just the five of them and the necessary minister. The whole ceremony seemed mellow somehow, happy, but in a misty, wistful sort of a way. You felt glad that two such nice people had found each other out and you wanted to cry over it a little.

Helga did when the bride and groom had driven away leaving her and her two problems to close up the cottage.

They were all through with everything. The front door had been locked and they stood on the front porch. From there she was going to the station to take the Northwest Express home.

The problem was going to be put up to her then and there. She could feel it coming and wished she could run.

"One of us is going to say good-by to you right here," Cass told her gently. "The other is probably never going to leave you for long, ever. We've decided that between ourselves. And now it's up to you to choose which one of us it shall be."

"Is this a joint proposal?"

"It is," George agreed huskily. "We both love you and have since we saw you on the train that day last week."

"And I love both of you," Helga declared.

"We even know that," Cass admitted, "but there must be a difference, one of us you want for a mate, the other for a life-long friend. Say which."

The two men stood on the steps just below her. It was a moment more tense than when a jury files back into a court soon after having been "out" for days.

Helga cleared her throat nervously.

"This is going to sound silly and illogically feminine," she began, "but I've got to make my decision my own way. If both of you were equally wealthy or equally poor it would be much more difficult to choose. As it is it's easier."

Neither man spoke. It would have broken the spell if anyone had interrupted the sentences she was trying to formulate.

"If I married the one who is very wealthy I know that I should always feel deep down in my heart that perhaps I had been influenced by the fact that he could give me every luxury—I would some day accuse myself of having sold myself to the highest bidder. I've got a funny rebellious streak in me. I want to be my own man, as my father puts it. So I'm going to insure myself against self-reproach by putting my heart in the hands of the poor man who loves me and my trust and friendship in the hands of the rich man who loves me, too. You, George, have almost everything else. Cass needs me more than you do."

Cass, the real Cass, would have started away then and there, but his friend would not stand for it. Nothing would satisfy him but a blurring out of the whole truth and the why of it.

"So you see," he concluded, "it was a sort of an unintentional mistake in the first place and we carried it on because I wanted to, I, not Cass—because no girl had ever liked me for myself alone and I cared so much that I wanted to find out—"

"Then you need me even if you are rich?" demanded Helga.

"Woman, without you I'm going to die."

"Then you aren't—where's Geo—I mean Cass?"

"There he goes—out the gate."

"He's whistling."

"That's to make us think he doesn't care. But he has stopped now. That's because you can't whistle and cry at the same time."

They sat down on the steps a moment.

It was rather overwhelming.

Finally Helga reached over and took his hand between both of her own.

"It will be all right, dear. He'll forget. And we must be very, very happy so that no one of the three of us will ever have a chance to think we have made a mistake."

A tensely dramatic story of a man who came back, the "The Bluebird" by Peter B. Kyne. You will find it in the next COSMOPOLITAN.

Green Ink

(Continued from page 99)

The practise wasn't worth five hundred a year, and instead of improving, it was deteriorating. Oh, clearly enough, Carsdale had got hold of a good thing! All right, said Grice, but it should go hard if he didn't find out what that good thing was. And in his own crafty way he set to work to watch Carsdale, day in and day out, certain that some little movement, some chance word, would give him a clue to the solicitor's secret.

But Grice got scant opportunity of watching Carsdale. Three weeks after Flapp's brother from London had laid the traveler to rest with the dead and gone Flapps in St. Pancras churchyard, Grice, going to the office at his usual hour one Monday morning, found to his as-

tonishment that the outer door was unlocked. He pushed it open and went in. There was nothing unusual visible in his own room, but there was a lot to see in Carsdale's. Carsdale himself was there. He lay across the hearth-rug, face downwards, arms thrown out, hands clutching nothing. There was a pool of blackening, coagulated blood on the floor near his head, and his sandy-colored hair was stained with blood. Before ever he laid a hand on him, Grice knew, not only that Carsdale was dead, but that he had been dead some time.

In that first moment of surprise, Grice became subconsciously aware of certain things. One was that Carsdale's private room had been ransacked from top to bottom. The safe was

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Buick
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First place at the National Automobile Shows for the seventh consecutive year



YOU ARE PROUD to place before your guests the daintiest foods that the cook's intriguing art can concoct. Naturally, too. For who goes to a party expecting a repast that will conform to a dietitian's ideal?

But these rich and creamy delicacies, that are so delicious, in reality are insidious enemies of teeth and gums.

The "pink" toothbrush— a penalty of modern food

It's all quite simple. Rough, coarse foods, which require chewing, stimulate the gums. Modern soft food, eaten hastily, does not give the stimulation, the exercise, which our gums need to keep them firm and healthy.

That's why tooth troubles due to weakened gums are so great a problem today.

Ipana Tooth Paste is used by thousands of dentists in fighting gum troubles. Many have written us that they prescribe a gum massage with Ipana after the ordinary brushing with Ipana. For, because of the presence of ziralol, Ipana aids in healing soft gums and in keeping them firm and healthy.

Send for a trial tube

Ipana cleanses teeth safely and thoroughly. And its flavor is delicious, too. Send today for an introductory sample.

IPANA TOOTH PASTE

—made by the makers of Sal Hepatica

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42 Rector St.
New York, N.Y.

Kindly send me a trial tube of IPANA TOOTH PASTE without charge or obligation on my part.

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Address.....
City..... State.....



open. Its contents were in disorder. Every drawer in the dead man's desk had been pulled out and turned over. The tin boxes which held clients' documents had been forced and the documents themselves were strewn about. There was nothing in the place that had not been searched. Evidently the murderer, whoever he was, had spent much time, hours, in the room after committing his crime. And during all that time he had not bothered himself to pick up and restore to its place the weapon with which he had struck Carsdale dead—a heavy iron poker, which belonged not to that but to the outer office. There it lay, thrown down by the dead man's side.

All this Grice saw within the first minute of entrance to that gloomy death hole. In the next he saw something else. Carsdale's desk, usually kept with pride, care and tidiness, was a mass of papers, books, small boxes, all sorts of things. But across it, and still sticking in places, though dry on the papers, ran a flood of green ink. Carsdale had been a faddist in many things; he had a fad for green ink, and he made it himself out of some patent powder or other. There was always a big bottle of it on his desk; the murderer had knocked it over in his search; the stopper had come out; the desk was deluged with it; it had run down on Carsdale's cushioned chair and on the carpet below. Somehow or other the sight of that green ink made Grice feel queer . . . he turned, shot out of the place and ran, panting, for the police.

The police surgeon gave it as his considered opinion that Carsdale had been dead about thirty-six hours when he was called to see his body. Therefore, said the police, he must have been murdered late on Saturday evening. Inquiry at the residential hotel in which he lived, not far from Episcopos Lane, proved that at eight o'clock on that evening he went out carrying a small suitcase and saying that he was going away for the week-end. On that the police built up a theory. Carsdale, they said, must have called to his office for some reason and had been followed into it by the murderer, who had probably struck him down at once, and then, fastening himself in and securing the various blinds and shutters had proceeded to ransack the place in a search for something.

What was that something?

That was the question which every policeman and detective and every man and woman in Wrychester went about asking of themselves and their acquaintances. The only living soul who could have given an answer to it, based on probability, was Grice. Grice, as soon as he recovered his wits, knew well enough that what the murderer had been after was the thing that Flapp had left with Carsdale. He might have said as much—he ought to have said as much—to the police, and the eminent men from the Criminal Investigation Department who came nosing round Episcopos Lane; he ought, in duty bound, to have told them that if they wanted to clear up the mystery they must go back to John Flapp.

But the mind of the official policeman is as mysterious as the problems presented to it, and it did not occur to anybody in this instance that the visit of Flapp, deceased, to Carsdale, murdered, was at all relative. Consequently they asked Grice no question about Flapp, and Grice volunteered no information. In point of fact, Grice would not have helped them, however much they had pressed him, for a simple reason. Once the nine-days' wonder of the affair had blown over, Carsdale's relatives commissioned Grice, as clerk, to clear things up at the office, and there Grice was left alone. And Grice was glad of his job—for he had a firm conviction that the murderer had not discovered what he wanted to discover, and he believed that the thing was still there and still open to discovery. If so—he was going to discover it, for himself.

And suddenly, some two or three weeks after he had found Carsdale lying battered to death on his own hearth-rug, Grice came upon the secret. He had steadily tidied up that disordered room. The papers and documents were

restored to their tin boxes; the contents of the safe were examined and stored away; everything was becoming as spick-and-span as it was when Carsdale walked into the room and the night of his death. And Grice, in furtherance of his own schemes, had given a thorough investigation to everything, spending leisurely days in research where the murderer had spent hurried hours. But he had found nothing up to the time when his task was near completion.

Then, one afternoon, he tidied out Carsdale's private drawer—the top drawer in the table desk over which the green ink had been spilled. He had never opened it until then; he now found that it must have been open when the ink was knocked over, for the fluid had run over all sorts of things, private things that Carsdale kept there; cigars, cigarettes, tobacco. It had soaked into some of these. There was a small bag, a linen bag, of Transvaal tobacco, which the dead man had been very fond of smoking; the green ink had soaked right through it. Grice picked it up to throw it into the fireplace as ruined and useless. But he paused as his fingers closed on it . . . and the next instant he had thrust those fingers into the sticky mess and had drawn out, and was staring with amazement and also with comprehension, at what he knew to be a magnificent uncut diamond.

The first thought that came to Grice as he sat there with the stone in his hand was not of its probable value, nor its history, nor of it as a diamond at all—it was of something vastly more important. It shaped itself into a question, and the question rang and rang through his head like the beating of a clock that has suddenly begun to strike and won't be stooped . . . *Who was the man who knew that Carsdale had the diamond and had murdered him—fruitlessly—in the hope of securing it for himself? Who?*

Other questions sprang out of that. Was the murderer a Wrychester man—to whom, perhaps, Carsdale had confided his secret? Or was he some friend or acquaintance of Flapp's, who had come on purpose to Wrychester in quest of the diamond after Flapp's death? Anyway, whoever the murderer was, he had failed to discover the diamond; there it was in the hollow of his, Grice's hand. But—would he come back? Was he even now somewhere about, watching, waiting?

Grice, however, was not temperamentally inclined to abstract speculation. He had already seen through the whole thing. Flapp, in the course of his world wanderings had somehow or other become possessed of this diamond; whether honestly or not, Grice cared little. Flapp had brought it home; had shown it to Carsdale; possibly had asked Carsdale's advice about disposing of it privately; Carsdale had persuaded Flapp to leave it with him for safe custody. Then Flapp had died, and Carsdale, believing that no one knew of the diamond's existence, had stuck to it. Now it had fallen into Grice's hands—very well, said Grice, it should go hard but that he would stick to it. And when he went to his lodgings at the end of the day, he took the diamond with him and hid it in a safe place where, if anything happened and a search was instituted, it would be impossible for anybody to find it.

And now Grice made plans. His job of clearing up was almost through; in another fortnight he would be out of an engagement; Carsdale's next of kin had sold the practise to another Wrychester firm as a going concern, but Grice was not included in the sale. He decided that he would leave Wrychester, take the diamond with him, find out by guarded inquiry how and where to dispose of it to the best advantage, and with the proceeds would leave the country. All cut and dried, this plan—but in the meantime he wanted to know all he could learn about diamonds, their characteristics, quality, value. And being fertile in ideas and swift in execution he gave—under an assumed name and at a temporary address in an adjacent town—a commission to a London bookseller for a supply of technical



"A physical wreck—I was irritable, nervous, debilitated. I tried nearly every curative treatment known to science, but to no avail. I was simply depleted of nervous energy. When I heard of Fleischmann's Yeast I was skeptical of the wonderful results attributed to it. After using the yeast, my digestion became better, my complexion brighter, and I slowly regained lost vitality."

(Clair C. Cook, Los Angeles, Calif.)

"We restaurant eaters must force greasy, quickly fried food into our stomachs in a hurry. And our next move is 'take one of these pills each night!' Even the best stomach cannot stand such treatment. On the advice of a friend I ate my first yeast cake. Now I feel like the man who puts coal on a fire. He gets heat units, while today I'm enjoying health and vigor units, and am glad to be out of the 'glass of water and pill' class."

(Thomas Leyden, Elizabeth, N. J.)

"I knew my headaches and unwholesome complexion were caused by constipation. To take frequent cathartics was my regular program and even by doing this I was tired and dozey. 'I like what yeast does for me' said one of my customers and asked if I had ever tried it. I began to drink yeast in milk regularly. Soon people began to comment on how well I was looking—my husband said I grew younger—the mirror told me my complexion and eyes were clear and bright. Cathartics are now a thing of the past."

(Mabelle Conomikes, Marathon, N. Y.)

"And my Fleischmann's Yeast cakes as usual.' For almost three years I have given this order to my grocer several times each week and will continue indefinitely. As a young mother in a run-down condition, with boils rendering me almost helpless, I felt that the end of my endurance had been reached. In desperation I sent for Fleischmann's Yeast cakes. The boils began to dry up. I slept better—had a keener appetite, felt better and regained my strength and vivacity."

(H. M. Raup, Linthicum Heights, Md.)



FOUR KINDRED ILLS ~ ~ ~

*Lowered Vitality ~ Stomach Troubles
Constipation ~ ~ Skin Disorders*

One simple food to banish them ~ ~

THESE remarkable reports are typical of thousands of similar tributes to Fleischmann's Yeast.

There is nothing mysterious about its action. It is not a "cure-all," not a medicine in any sense. But when the body is choked with the poisons of constipation—or when its vitality is low so that skin, stomach and general health are affected—this simple, natural food achieves literally amazing results.

Concentrated in every cake of Fleischmann's Yeast are millions of tiny yeast-plants, alive and active.

At once they go to work—invigorating the whole system, clearing the skin, aiding digestion, strengthening the intestinal muscles and making them healthy and active.

Fleischmann's Yeast for Health

comes only in the tinfoil package—it cannot be purchased in tablet form. All grocers have it. Start eating it today! You can order several cakes at a time, for Yeast will keep fresh in a cool, dry place for two or three days.

Dissolve one cake in a glass of water
(just hot enough to drink)

before breakfast and at bedtime. Fleischmann's Yeast when taken this way is especially effective in overcoming or preventing constipation. Or eat 2 or 3 cakes a day—spread on bread or crackers—dissolved in fruit juices or milk—or eat it plain.

Write us for further information, or let us send you a free copy of our latest booklet on Yeast for Health. Address: Health Research Dept. K-12, The Fleischmann Company, 701 Washington Street, New York.





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"It's the very thing I've been wishing for!" is the expression which TUKAWAY invariably evokes. The smartness of this unique Folding Umbrella in its trim little container never fails to please.

One motion and TUKAWAY is out of the packet. Another: the rod is straightened and set in place. A third: a simple action opens the umbrella ready for use. *All in less than ten seconds!*

TUKAWAY slips easily into grip, desk-drawer, golf-bag or auto-pocket. It may be had in black or colored fabrics with distinctive handles for men and women.

For the standard folding umbrella—insist upon TUKAWAY. At all good stores.

The Height of Perfection in Weather Protection!

SIROCO *Cravenette Processed*

No more leaky umbrellas! The new "Cravenette" Processed SIROCO—lasts longer and repels moisture as no other umbrella will. Choice of new style handles, tips and ends to match in all colors and black—for Men, Women and Children. An inexpensive and practical Christmas gift.

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books about precious stones, and when he had received these, set to work to read up diamonds.

He read much at the office. There was little to do there by that time; he was merely attending at it until the day came for closing altogether. And as he sat poring over one of his books one morning, with other books lying open on the table around him, some of the widespread pages showing colored illustrations of famous stores, the door opened and in walked a little Jew whom Grice knew well enough by sight as a vendor of jewelry, and by name as Issy Goldmark.

Issy Goldmark held some papers in his hand and waved them at Grice as he leaned across the counter. He smiled widely out of his cunning eyes and his voice was soft as new milk when he spoke.

"Mornin', Mithter Grithe!" he said. "Thith ith the firtht time I've ever been in a tholithithorth' ofith in Wrychethter, but I've jutht got to come! Thereth people that won't pay me, Mr. Grithe, won't nohow, and I mutht put them in the court. Thethe ith the accounth, Mr. Grithe—can you thee to them?"

Grice rose unwillingly and took the papers. While he was looking them through, the Jew's eyes went past him to the table and his gaze ran over the books and the pictures. But eyes, lips and nose were innocent enough when the clerk turned on them.

"Yes, I can do that for you," answered Grice. "This practise is being transferred, Mr. Goldmark, but I can put this matter in with others. I'll enter these at the County Court this afternoon if you'll give me the money for the fees. Let's see—they'll come to three pound six altogether."

The Jew counted out the money, in silver, from a well filled bag which he produced from a hip pocket.

"Much obliged, Mithter Grithe," he said. "Then—I'll hear about it in due courthe?"

"You'll hear about it," assented Grice, sweeping the half-crowns and florins up. "You'll have to appear in court and prove your claims, you know. I suppose you've got books?"

"Oh yeth, bookth and paperth—orderth, Mr. Grithe!" replied the Jew. "I can prove my claimth clear enough."

"That's all, then," said Grice. "You'll get notice of the date. Bring your books."

Then he returned to his own books, and for a moment wondered if his visitor had noticed them. But what matter if he had?—he knew nothing. He went on with his reading. Quite apart from the special purpose for which he had taken it up, he had by this time become profoundly interested in diamonds, and just then he was absolutely absorbed in one particular book—so much so that on that very evening he remained late at the office, snug in Carsdale's old room and at Carsdale's desk, deep in a study of diamond values . . . so deep, so unconscious of his surroundings that he let out a sharp cry of something like terror when a light but firm hand suddenly gripped his shoulder. He slewed round in his chair—and saw the Jew.

Goldmark looked straight at Grice and for a second said nothing. Grice gripped the arms of the revolving chair and stared at Goldmark. He too said nothing, though his lips were drawn back from his teeth. Then the Jew spoke.

"Mithter Grithe! You've got the diamond!" he said in a low, even voice. "Don't go for to deny it, Mithter Grithe! I knew you'd got it ath thoon ath I come into your ofith thith morning and thee you a-reading of them bookth. And don't be frightened, Mithter Grithe—we're all alone, and your street door'th fatth—and I've come to do bithneth. Good bithneth, Mithter Grithe!"

Grice was slowly recovering his wits. But his voice was shaky enough when he found it. "Wh—what diamond?" he demanded.

"What d'you mean by sneaking in here—" "I mean the diamond that Flapp left with Carthdale," interrupted Goldmark coolly. "You thee, Mithter Grithe, I come acroth Flapp in the train between Thouthehampton

and Wrychethter. Flapp, he wath talkative—rum, Mr. Grithe. Him an' me, we had a compartment to ourthelvtth. I wath looking over my thtock—jewelry. And all of a thudden he pulled out hith diamond and athked me if I'd ever theen anything like it. Th'elp me, I never had! And then, Mr. Grithe, when thingth developed here, of courthe I knew that Flapp had depothited it with Carthdale, and thomebody done in Carthdale for it but didn't find it. But you've found it, Mr. Grithe!—and let'th do bithneth!"

Grice sprang up from his chair and gave signs of violence. But Goldmark stepped back; his hand came out of his pocket and Grice found himself looking into the barrel of an automatic pistol.

"Bithneth, Mr. Grithe—quietly," said the Jew. "All for your own good. You can't do nothing with that diamond, for all your book-reading! But I can. You thee, if you move you're thure to be found out, and they'll thay you murdered Carthdale. P'rapph you did—I thouldn't wonder, but if you did, I don't care. You thee—"

"Damn you!" burst out Grice. "What d'you mean by suggesting—why, you fool, I could prove an alibi in two minutes!"

"No, you couldn't—ath it happenth, Mithter Grithe," retorted Goldmark. "You wath in and about the town that night about the time that Carthdale wath done in. What wath to prevent you thlipping in here after him, doing for him and coming back Thunday to thearch? Mithter Grithe—if I wath to accuthe you, you ain't got a cat'th chanthe!"

Then, with a swift smile, he nodded at Grice, confidently.

"You've got the diamond!" he whispered. "Come, Mithter Grithe—do bithneth! There ithn't a thoul but you an' me knowth of the exithtent of that diamond. Let'th go thares in it. I can thell it—to advantage. Be withe! There ithn't a bit of ritkh in what I propothe. But you're running no end of ritkh! Take my advitche, Mithter Grithe, now—do bithneth!"

Grice stood staring at his captor for a full moment.

"Put that pistol in your pocket!" he said at last. "Listen! I'll do business. I'll sell you the diamond, if—"

Goldmark smiled and slipped the automatic back to his pocket. He began to rub his hands.

"What do you want, Mr. Grithe?" he asked urbanely.

"Can you give me five hundred pounds in cash, tonight?" demanded Grice. "No check, mind you—cash!"

"Where ith the goodth, Mithter Grithe?" asked the Jew quietly. "Here?"

"No—at my lodgings," answered Grice.

"Then come and get 'em, Mithter Grithe, and walk with me to mine," said the other. "I'll give you five hundred poundth—in bank-noteth. Bank of England noteth!"

Without another word Grice put on his overcoat, turned out the light and left, the Jew, at his direction, going a little ahead. It was only a few minutes' walk to Grice's rooms, and presently he emerged from them with the diamond in his hand.

"Now—your place!" said Grice.

That too was only just behind High Street, and in five minutes more Grice found himself in a little upstairs parlor in the corner of which stood a safe. The Jew produced a bunch of keys and went towards it.

"Glad to do bithneth with a thenthible man, Mr. Grithe!" he said suavely. "I felt thure you'd thee reathon when it wath put before you."

Grice made no answer. He was staring straight before him—at a row of miscellaneous coats and overcoats which hung from pegs in a recess. But his eyes were riveted on one coat only—an old fawn-colored melton cloth covert coat. Underneath the cuff of the right sleeve was a discoloration, a broad patch. Green ink!

"Five hundred, Mithter Grithe," said the Jew, turning round. "I have to keep ready money thometimeth for bithneth purpotheth—



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it'th lucky I had tho much. If you'll hand over the diamond—"

Grice came back to earth with a start and laid the diamond on the table. Mechanically he took up and counted the roll of bank-notes.

"Quite correct!" he said, and moved towards the door. "Good night."

"Good night, Mithter ithe," said the Jew quietly. "And—mum ithe word, Mithter Grithe. Abtholute thilenth, Mithter Grithe!"

"Yes!" answered Grice. "Yes!" He went downstairs, et himself out and walked slowly into High Street. There, the bank-notes in his and, ne stood for several minutes absorbed in his wn thoughts. Then he suddenly turned, made swiftly round a corner and entering the police station, walked, unannounced, into the Superintendent's private room and laid the bank-notes under his nose.

"Listen!" he said quietly. "I know who murdered Carsdale! You can put your hands on him just now. And as for proof . . ."

And while the Superintendent sat open-mouthed, listening greedily, Grice dropped into a chair and began a clear, carefully phrased account of all that had happened since John Flapp first walked into Episcopus Lane.

The Skyrocket

(Continued from page 23)

tinsel finery of Rose Kimm's new pink dress. Some of the story of Sharon Kimm's childhood the world was to know when its spotlight fell full upon her. But only the best of it, cleansed and polished by the most expert hands.

Anyway, there was much that only Lucia knew, Lucia into whose narrow cot they carried the silent, quivering child on that night before Christmas. And Lucia's heart had opened and taken her in, and she had tried for days to bring back some color to the white cheeks and some sparkle to the blank, frightened eyes. Perhaps that was why, to the very end, through the glory and the shame, Lucia was to love her better than anyone else in the world, except Mickey Reid.

CHAPTER III

IT WAS exactly a week before Sharon Kimm realized she had been blacklisted in Hollywood.

Any old-timer could have told Sharon Kimm that when Mildred Rideout told her story a good many gates would be closed in her eager face. Unfortunately for Sharon, Mildred was popular. Many people who knew Aaron Savage felt sorry for her and, since they dared not vent their feelings upon him, they were glad to vent them on the girl in the case— whoever, at the moment she happened to be.

But Sharon knew no old-timers. She had few friends. She never dreamed of such a thing as a wholesale blacklisting.

The morning after she left the Savage lot, by request, she started out to find another job. This was no new experience in Sharon's life. It seemed to her she had done little else. But this time it was more intense than usual. She realized that when Lucia began a campaign against giving her any carfare, Lucia was always tight about money, but when she started to hold out carfare it was a sign of the worst.

She registered her protest while Sharon took her morning bath. Lucia came to the door, the oatmeal spoon in one hand.

"Do hurry, dear," she said, "and if you get started early you might find work today. Goodness knows we could use the money."

Sharon leaped out and began rubbing herself with the one puny towel.

"Darned old towel," said Sharon, pirouetting beneath it like a ballet-dancer. "Gosh, Lute, these are the bummiest towels. When I get rich, I'm going to have towels as big as the

blankets on our bed. This one don't leave anything to dry your feet on."

Then she began a dance that had been popular years before she was born. Among other lean adventures, Sharon had once gained some money and much experience dancing in the reformed survival of what had been the toughest dive in America.

"Well," said Lucia, dryly, "speaking of being rich, do you know how much money we've got at the present moment?"

Sharon's brow clouded. "Oh hell," she said miserably, "about a dime, I suppose."

"Four dollars and eighty-five cents," said Lucia. "You'll have to walk today, that's all. The rent's due next week, and we've got to eat. I'm sorry, darling."

"Well," said Sharon, "it looks like if I don't get a job pretty quick we're apt to starve to death. We never have yet, but there's a first time for everything. And I've come close enough a few times to know there's nothing romantic about dying for your art. Say a couple of prayers for me, Lute. You know more about praying than I do."

On the sidewalk of Hollywood Boulevard she drew a long breath, a breath of delight.

She loved it. She didn't know why—Sharon was very young and nothing in her life had taught her to analyze anything—but she did. Her eyes danced and the dimples deep about her round mouth danced and the blood in her veins danced to a little tune.

Nobody paid any attention to her. Even the group of taxi-drivers loitering at the corner of Cahuenga didn't give her a second glance. There was no reason why they should. She was nobody and her lure was buried in cheap clothes, badly worn.

And she hated being nobody. Her mouth was wry with it and her eyes green with it. But her toes tingled with the promises, the chances, that lay within this magic city.

If she could only get a chance. If she could only get started.

She turned the corner and went up a side street, beneath great rows of pepper trees that scattered their red berries and yellow flowers at her feet. The sidewalks around the Hirt studio were always sticky with pepper berries.

She knew the gateman at the Hirt studio. He could, if he would, let her in to see the seventh assistant casting director of that great institution. But she wasn't very hopeful about it. A great many girls had tried to vamp that gateman. But he was old and very tired of girls—especially pretty girls. They interested him about as much as chocolate creams interested a candy salesman.

But Sharon smiled at him just the same, shyly. When Sharon smiled, her eyes opened wide and dominated her whole face, innocent, strange, eager eyes that were never twice the same color because of the shifting thoughts and emotions behind them.

And then the smile was wiped from her eyes, and they began to grow darker, until they were almost black. For just inside the gate, hatless in the sun and smiling that quizzical, cool smile of his, she saw William Dvorak. Her heart turned over completely. There flitted through her brain some wild idea of dashing through the gate, past the dozing gateman, and flinging herself at William Dvorak's feet.

It would be dramatic. But somehow, as she watched, she didn't think it would be successful.

As a matter of fact, it was difficult at first glance to find anything about William Dvorak that could make a young girl's heart leap into her throat. A short powerfully built man, beginning to go bald above his forehead, with a pair of wonderful, mesmeric gray eyes, touched always by that slight, ironic smile that was his one beauty. The heavy, white silk shirt—he always wore the same kind of shirt whether the rest of his costume was composed of riding-breeches or dinner-coat—was open at the front, and showed his thick, powerful neck. He had a dominant, curved nose, and a thin-lipped intellectual mouth, both

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suggestive of breeding and ancestors used to command.

Somebody had once said that he looked like Napoleon and he had rather adopted the pose. It wasn't a bad one and a man like William Dvorak, who is constantly in the limelight, must have a pose of some kind, if only as a defense.

But it was not the man who made Sharon's heart behave so erratically. It was his power. For he was the man whose nod made and unmade stars.

He possessed a certain clairvoyance that enabled him to pick from the ranks people whom the public could be taught to adore and pay money to look upon. It is a strange talent, belonging to only a few great ones of the stage and screen. In no one was it more marked than in William Dvorak. That was why Sharon Kimm trembled when she looked at him, her cheeks a soft tangerine glow.

Her Irish imagination was caught by the possibilities, the drama, of the thing. Here they stood, two human beings, within a few feet of each other. If his eye should light upon her, his all-seeing eye, her struggles might be over. If she could will him to notice her, this man could make all her dreams come true. A whisper would draw his attention, probably, and she dared not speak.

If he would only look at her.

But his glance passed over her without a flicker of hesitation. No prophetic sense brought it to a halt upon the slim, quivering figure, nor told him that some day his life and hers would be joined in strange issues.

Sharon walked slowly away. Her eyes felt hot with tears. As she walked around the corner from the Hirt to the Churchill studio, a chill began to creep over her exaltation of the morning.

On the steps of the main building, a gray shingle affair with red, striped awnings, she met a girl she knew, a black-haired, black-eyed girl in a great fur coat and a smart new hat. Sharon didn't know her very well and she couldn't remember her name.

"Hello," said the girl in the fur coat. "I heard you got fired at Savage's. What happened?"

Sharon's eyes narrowed. She wasn't surprised. The underground channels carry news fast in Hollywood. No one has ever kept a secret there yet. A few people may think they have, but they are simply the people Hollywood loves well enough to keep quiet about.

"Well," she said, "you do know a lot, don't you? If you know so much, you ought to know why I got fired. It'd be silly for me to try to learn you—to give you any information. But I'll bet I know where you got that fur coat."

The girl grinned good-naturedly. "Yes? All right, Mr. Bones, where did I get this fur coat?"

"Why, you found a pawn ticket," said Sharon Kimm, and they laughed together.

After all, they were both bucking the same game. Why knife each other?

"Is Guy in?" Sharon asked and the girl nodded and went her good-natured, easy way.

Sharon knew Guy Churchill, head of the big comedy studio, where they turned out two-reel "laugh makers" by the hundreds. Everybody knew Guy. Nothing upstage about him. He was just as easy to see as the postman.

Sharon heard him shouting as she approached his office. He was always shouting at somebody, but it was like the bark of a big, friendly dog.

"You tell that gosh-darned fool," he shouted, "that I said he was to make pictures my way or get another job and I don't care much which. I'm paying the bills around here and I don't care what he thinks."

He banged up the receiver as Sharon sauntered in.

"Say," she said coolly, "you don't need no telephone. They can hear you through the window."

The man roared with easy laughter. "Not clear to New York, I guess, honey," he said.

He caught every woman honey. It was merely a habit, neither an invitation nor a threat.

"I got a director back there," he went on, "says he wants to make better pictures. I told him pictures is plenty good enough. The public don't want better pictures. They've proved it. Most good pictures is flops."

He said a great deal more. No man in pictures could talk more and say less than Guy Churchill. And Guy never said No. On the other hand, he never said Yes. So there you were.

There, too, was Sharon, out on the street once more, still without a job and her face set against a growing certainty. There had been something in his manner—an aloofness—a coldness of eye. She shivered.

Mildred Rideout was a friend of his.

The next walk was longer. She wished she had made Lucia give her carfare. Her feet began to burn on the sidewalk. The sun had come from behind the soft fog and the air was heavy and sticky with it.

Her body ached with fatigue and her soul with discouragement. And she knew she was growing weary of the unequal fight. Wasn't she ever going to have anything in this world? Wasn't she ever going to be anybody?

The past rose starkly behind her.

Her soul shuddered away from the memory of those lean, starved years following her mother's death; hard, bitter, lonely years, for Sharon's father had been right. Life seemed to stop for him when the warm, rich beauty of Rose no longer quickened it within him. He had hung on a little while and then slipped away, almost without making a ripple, even in his small circle. But, at that, his going hadn't meant so much to Sharon. Things had really been happier for her at the Morgans, where she went to live. Lucia was the closest person in the world to her and they were kind people, even if they were so poor. The county allowed them three dollars a month for her keep. That was a lot of money to Sharon and the Morgans. Only Sharon hated being a ward of the County Charities.

As soon as they were old enough, she and Lucia went to work in a bakery. It wasn't unpleasant—wrapping the fresh, sweet-smelling loaves in oiled paper.

Lucia studied all the time, and took night courses in stenography at the nearest high school. But Sharon hated that kind of dry and impersonal work. She was glad to be through with school. No one had ever made it appeal to her in any way. She liked to read, sometimes, if she could find books about kings and queens and millionaires—books that described their lives and surroundings and possessions. Those were the only books her mother had ever read.

When she left the bakery it was for a laundry.

The work was hard, but Sharon wasn't afraid of hard work, and the pay was good. It allowed her to save a little money, so that when Lucia completed her studies and became a stenographer, they could begin their efforts to "get into pictures."

Sharon cherished that ambition with a defiant determination and a steely purpose. She had read of the fame and fortune of picture stars.

And, after a year, a long, hard-fought year, here she was back at the beginning. Forlorn and worse than friendless.

She faced the thought of starting once more upon that endless, soul-destroying, heart-sickening round of the studios, with the first real hopelessness that had ever touched her.

Back on the Boulevard, she went into a small casting agency, and stood there, putting on a bold front to cover her sense of her own inadequacy.

The young man at the desk, blond and blasé, gave her an indifferent look—the sort of look that a dealer in second-hand furniture might cast upon a chair offered for his bid. Impersonal. Appraising. Bored. Then he continued his conversation on the telephone.

Sharon sat down defiantly in the best wicker rocking chair. Certainly she wasn't going to be



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snubbed by any office boy in a bum casting agency. Not if she knew it.

When he had finished, he came over and spoke to her.

"You've been working at Savage's, haven't you?" he asked.

"You ought to know," said Sharon, drawing her level black brows together, "you got me the job."

"Why did you leave?"

Sharon had been thinking up an answer to that question all morning and hadn't yet found the right one. That was the reason she had delayed coming to the agency until the last.

The young man stood looking down at her with a frown.

He saw a thin, white little girl, with a mass of hair like an autumn leaf, and long, light-gray eyes deeply rimmed with black. Puzzled by some suggestion of haunting grace, he noticed the way her head was fitted so perfectly and correctly upon the long, round throat, and he was conscious of the perfection of her fine, small hands on which the laundry had left no trace, and her tiny, slim ankles.

His eyes fastened upon her mouth, that was almost round because of the full, curving lower lip, and the deep bow in the upper one. It made a splash of color on her face, as though someone had crushed a red rosebud there.

The blond and blasé young man was more and more puzzled and a good deal annoyed. He was annoyed because he found this white, sullen girl in her terrible clothes strangely attractive. He stood staring down at Sharon, his eyes beginning to grow hot. Instantly, as she met that look, Sharon's eyes narrowed sullenly. She despised that look in the eyes of men. Disdained it. It did not even flatter her, as it flattered many women.

Under it, she flared into reckless frankness.

"I left because I got fired. I got fired for something that wasn't my fault. It had nothing to do with my work. Believe it or not, that's the truth."

"Well," said the man, angry and flushed under the flicker of disdain, "I'll do what I can. But I can't keep getting you jobs if you don't keep them. If I were you, I'd give up this picture bug. To tell you the truth, you're not the type for the screen. The market's overcrowded. You'd better go to the exchange, if you're determined to keep on."

Sharon banged the door behind her.

The exchange. The place where directors sent when they wanted hundreds of people for a big mob scene. Where the type extras—men with beards, or negroes, or fat old washerwomen registered and were on call. The bottom of the ladder. The exchange, where you hadn't even a name, but were herded together like cattle and sent in lots with a number to the studios when they called, like so many cans of tomatoes. It seemed to her she had already spent a normal lifetime in that place, sitting on the wooden benches with men and women of every race, color and odor in the world.

She couldn't go back. But she did, sick, weary and beaten.

And that day was only the beginning of a long, dreary, deadly week. At the end of it, Sharon Kimm realized beyond a doubt that she was on the blacklist.

"I didn't think she'd do that," she said to Lucia, rather wildly, on the evening of the seventh day. Panic had washed her eyes to a light gray. "I should think she'd be satisfied now that she's got me off the lot and out of her way. I don't see what good it does her to starve me to death."

"Maybe she hasn't," said Lucia, trying to be calm and motherly beyond her twenty years; "maybe you just imagine it. Things have—just gone against us, darling, that's all. I'm sure I'll get work soon. I don't think Miss Rideout would do that."

"Well, she has. Other girls get work."

"Mr. Alden promised me something. Oh, Sharon, if somebody would only buy one of my stories."

It was not often that Lucia spoke of her own

disappointments. They did not compare, even in her own mind, with Sharon's.

"Well, they won't," said Sharon, curling her slim ankles under her on the let-down bed. "As for promises, this damn town is full of promises. No—something is wrong. I didn't do so bad at Savage's. And it means something to have been a Savage bathing girl, even for a short time. That's why—I was so pleased and happy when I got it. I thought it'd—give me my chance. Now—I can't even get a chance to be in a mob."

"Oh, darling," Lucia cried, "you're too sensitive. You take everything to heart so."

"Take everything to heart?" Sharon flamed at her. "I do? What'd you think? And I'm walking on cardboard in my shoes, and nobody wants me, and my clothes—they look like they came out of a rag bag—"

Suddenly Sharon turned and put her head against Lucia's warm shoulder.

"I'm hungry," she said.

They clung a moment, and then Sharon sat up, and began to giggle.

"Hell," she said, and she flung back her head so that the mass of autumn-leaf hair danced in the dim and dingy light like some magnificent flag of defiance, "something'll happen, maybe. I know one thing about pictures. It's generally accidents that get you your chance, if you haven't got a pull. And I guess all the accidents in the world haven't already happened. One might still happen to me."

CHAPTER IV

NOTHING could have surprised Sharon Kimm more than to know that an event of tremendous importance to her was taking place at that very moment in the stately dining-room of Nadine Allis.

If Sharon thought about Nadine Allis at all—and of course she did, exactly as everyone else did in Hollywood, because Nadine was not only a very important but a very popular person as well—it was with bated breath and a sort of deep, loving envy. For Nadine Allis had all the things Sharon wanted and was all the things Sharon hoped to be.

It was at the dinner table that Nadine, in the careless and impulsive way that marked most of her decisions, suddenly remarked that she must have something very original and very jazzy at her party.

"People are so tired of just parties," said Nadine, looking across at her husband, with those big, friendly, twinkling blue eyes of hers, set so bewitchingly far apart and ever so little askant. "If they're bored there is nothing to do but make love or get drunk and, as they always make love to the wrong people, either one makes things unpleasant."

Her mother, looking at her with noncommittal eyes, said: "The trouble with society here is that you don't seem to ask the people you want or the people you like. You just ask the people who are somebody. You ask names. Isn't that true now?"

Nadine laughed at her and made a little grimace at her husband.

"Mr. Irving Spencer Kohl," she said, "will you please listen to me? You are the impolitest man I ever saw in my life."

"He doesn't mean to be impolite," said Nadine's mother, hastily. She had a habit of speaking of her son-in-law in an abstract way, as though he were not present. "Can't you see he's just busy? And I expect it concerns your business, if it comes to that."

The thin, dark, hawk-faced little man looked at his mother-in-law approvingly but imperturbably. He had long since ceased to listen to her. He understood her perfectly and was concerned with her only in so far as she could affect Nadine. She was his ally. She had been from the first. Her interests and his were the same.

The motion picture industry knew Irv Kohl for one of its masters. A man of immeasurably sound judgment and ordinary caution, taken now and again by a terrific attack of the gambling fever. During those attacks he was

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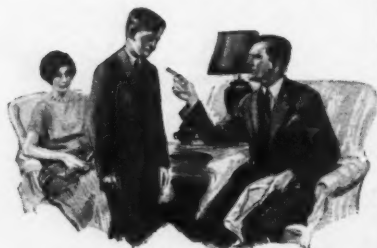
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capable of the most vivid and daring flights into the sun, and it was upon those flights that both his and Nadine's success was founded.

He could talk fast enough, and in terms of millions, when he had to. Only in love was Irv Kohl inarticulate. He could never turn a phrase to meet his wife's light and friendly rillery.

"What did you want, dear?" he asked, in his guttural voice, which had still a slight accent of the foreign language which he had been born to speak.

His eyes lighted as he looked at her. Her fairness was full of color, in the dark lashes and brows, the warm skin, the coral lips.

"I said, you are to think up something unusual for my party," she said severely. "Have you forgotten we're giving a party?"

Her husband sighed. "What'd you want to be always giving parties for, Nadine?" he asked gravely. "Every time I turn around, aren't we giving another party. Sometimes I should think you would take a rest."

"Pooh," said Nadine, "I adore it. Why should I rest? I'm as strong as an ox."

"She is, too, Irv," said her mother, timidly. "She's young. And she's always been strong, ever since she was a baby. She weighed nine pounds and a half when she was born. A man's got to let a woman enjoy herself when she's young. It's nice if she wants to have her friends here in her own house."

In the silence that followed, Nadine fell into one of those animated reveries of hers. You could never imagine Nadine perfectly quiet. Even when she was sitting motionless, she sparkled.

A woman made for love, and yet her face under the soft, golden curls was innocent of passion and of experience or knowledge. For all her sparkle, there was something still and deep about Nadine Allis.

Irv Kohl had gone back to his endless telegrams. And Nadine's mother had resumed that amiable but slightly melancholy contemplation of the ceiling which seemed to occupy all her leisure moments.

So it happened that young Frisco Tate entered upon a complete silence.

He opened the door noiselessly. Frisco had a way of moving without sound that argued none too well for his past. When Nadine Allis looked up from her brown study, she found Frisco confronting her, in all his strange but accustomed ugliness.

Frisco was very ugly. What he might have been like once, only his mother could know. For life had begun early to change the general contour of young Mr. Tate's countenance and disposition. For instance, it is possible, even probable, that in the beginning his ears matched. And surely no one was ever born with a nose like his. Not nature, but certain gentlemen in the pursuit of their profession, were also responsible for the fact that one of his eyelids refused, save on very rare occasions, to raise itself at all.

Yet Frisco was a member of the Irving Spencer Kohl productions and an important one at that.

"If you can make Frisco laugh," Irv Kohl once told an aspiring comedian, "you can get the hardest-boiled exhibitor on the exchange." And to the highbrow scenario writer he remarked: "Turn your script over to Frisco, please. If he don't understand it, it's out. Frisco has got what I should call the average intelligence of the motion picture audiences."

"Frisco," said Nadine, following a sudden inspiration, "you're the very thing I've been looking for. You have arrived, as it were, at the psychological moment."

"Yeh?" said Frisco.

"Do you remember that dance you did for me with that colored girl up at Purcell's, that time we were in San Francisco on location?" Nadine got up and went over to him. "Will you do that for my gang tomorrow night? It'll be a riot. I'll bet you not one of them ever saw anybody really walk the dog like they used to do it on the Barbary Coast. I know they never did."

"No?" said Frisco. "Where they been all their lives?"

"Well, I never saw it before. Will you do it?" "Why not?" said Frisco. "But it's a duet, not a solo. Who'd I get to do it with me, huh?" Nadine's ready laughter bubbled.

"Now, Frisco," she said, "you can't tell me you don't know some girl that would be tickled to death to do it. I know what a ladies' man you are."

"Yeh?" said Frisco. He held to the old gang rule that a man does not boast of his conquests. "Well, there's just one gal in Hollywood could do it to suit me. She used to be a drink gal in the Thalia after they had to turn it into a soda fountain. They done a fair business with the high-toned slumming parties and gangs off rubberneck wagons—like the fake opium dens in Chinatown do, and this gal I'm speaking of and a wop boy named Joe Petrodez used to walk the dog for 'em."

"Did you say she was in Hollywood?" asked Nadine.

"Yeh."

"Get her," said Nadine.

"All right," said Frisco.

CHAPTER V

NOW Michael Reid was young and not at all bad to look upon. There was just a hint of the devil in those dark, roving eyes of his. His shoulders were broad and graceful, and they tapered nicely to a slim waist and long, slender legs. His habit of letting just the smallest shadow of a smile flash across his face and disappear in a quick, hard young stare had made any number of feminine hearts beat faster.

Mickey was also, if the truth must be known, a dancing fool, and he had never been able to subscribe wholeheartedly to the eighteenth amendment. His ancestors came from Kilmarnock and the mountains of Kerry and had never been famous for respecting the law in times of peace.

Considering all these things, and in addition that upon this particular evening he had been able to tie his dress tie with both dash and elegance, and that his dark hair—which was unruly and apt to betray him by curling in the most unexpected places—had for once succumbed in a flat and shining smoothness, it would seem that Mickey should have been in a glow of anticipation.

But he was not.

Being only a struggling young juvenile himself, he was lucky to be invited to Nadine Allis's party. There came the rub.

Mickey was nervous, very nervous, about the woman who had invited him. He was afraid she had made up her mind to fall in love with him. And he wasn't quite young enough, young as he was, to enjoy that. He had served his apprenticeship to ladies with coal black hair, who wore long jet earrings and no more clothes than the law required.

As he descended the stairs, Mickey's eyebrows formed an amused but rather wistful question mark.

The ride over in the taxi proved less troublesome than he had feared. He could be amusing enough when he chose, could young Michael Reid, and he chose very, very hard on that taxi ride. Possibly he wouldn't have to take her home. People so often got lost at Nadine's parties. He would get lost if the matter were humanly possible. For while one may talk to a lady in a taxi going to a party, it is more difficult—in fact it is almost impossible—to accomplish the same feat going home.

It was a very gorgeous party, marked chiefly by an amazing informality. Young Mickey Reid found it perhaps just a trifle ostentatious in its display. There seemed to be just a little too much of everything.

He saw Nadine moving about among the lilies and roses and daffodils that filled every nook and corner, and the great, fragrant baskets of thick, pink carnations. She wore something all soft laces and chiffons, beneath which

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The giving and receiving of presents has always added to the merriness of Christmas. The better the gift, the better the day—measuring the gift, of course, by the amount of pleasure it brings to the recipient rather than by material worth. If it happens that others can share in this pleasure, there is an added value. What better gift then, than a good radio set? Happiness for the person who receives the present, and enjoyment of the entertainment which it will bring into the home for every member of the family. A radio set is an *unselfish* Christmas gift.

Just a suggestion—if you do buy a set, be sure to get it working by Christmas eve. There will be special programs from most of the well known stations—Christmas carols and the like. Incidentally it's wise to buy as good a set as you can afford. A wide range permits of a wide variety of entertainment.

We will be glad to help you in the selection of a set for your home. Edgar H. Felix has written for us a pamphlet "*Selecting A Radio Set For Your Home.*" There is still time between now and Christmas to get this buying guide if you will write immediately.

Mr. Felix has also prepared a radio chart and trouble finding booklet for present owners. *The complete set costs only 10 cents.*

Every owner—or prospective owner—of a radio set should have this reference pamphlet. Mr. Felix, Associate of the Institute of Radio Engineers, is a leading authority on Radio maintenance and operation. The complete set will be mailed to you for only ten cents. **Use this coupon.**



CAROLS ON THE AIR

On Christmas Eve, a program of Christmas carols, sung by the famous Choir of Old Trinity Church will be broadcast from New York. The beautiful Trinity Chimes will be broadcast on New Year's Eve.

peeped tiny garlands of roses and delicate sprays of forget-me-nots. No one could have found any fault with Nadine Allis that night, and the rope of pearls that went three times about her throat was no more than a match for the luminous, fair skin.

It is not a natural thing for other women to like a woman as beautiful as Nadine. But they did. Most of them gathered about her. She had a court of younger girls of the colony who always hung upon her lightest word.

It is an odd phenomenon of all Hollywood parties, Mickey Reid had discovered, that during the first hour, the women gather in little groups and gossip. The men gather in other little groups and drink.

He saw Edwin Vaughn and his wife, always a little aloof, always vaguely uncomfortable. Mrs. Vaughn's hair was so elaborately arranged, her manner so stiff. He wandered over and tried to talk with them. But he couldn't. The trouble was neither of them had any sense of humor.

Margaret Vane was there, all serene and shining loveliness. She nodded to him, with her grave gaiety, and started to beckon, but a tall, good-looking man came up and swept her away, and she could only wave back at him with a great show of regret. He was just a little intrigued by Margaret Vane.

As she floated out onto the polished cement floor of the patio, where they were dancing, he had a quick vision of Mrs. Tom Channing, sitting alone, parked by a husband who had gone in search of pastures new. The sight of her brought a quick, intolerant young frown to his face. The woman wore too many jewels. It was such rotten bad taste. It always called attention to her colorless hair, and her wrinkled neck, and her haunted face. Those seven and eight carat rings on her fingers, that tiara in her hair.

And then he felt suddenly ashamed and very sorry for her. He had a glimpse of her eyes as they followed her husband. So a woman could still love a man like Tom Channing. Tom was drunk, as usual, drunk and nasty and looking for trouble. He'd find it before the night was over. He always did. The man was insufferable. If he hadn't been Tom Channing, he wouldn't have been allowed in any decent house.

In the dining-room, the champagne flowed freely. They carried it up in tubs, full of ice. Mickey drank of it. But it was the lights, the exquisitely shaded lights, and the throbbing music, and the scent and color of the flowers mingled with the expensive perfumes and enticing gowns of the women, the glitter of jewels against bare arms and shoulders, that made him just a little drunk.

On the floor in the big hall a merry group had started to play Jong-Keena. The chant floated over the noise and laughter. Tom Channing was there, engineering the thing—no one else would have dared—and little Pearl Ward, and Pepper O'Malley, and the great Diane Lamartine, her dark, foreign face flushed with the excitement of the new game. She had already lost all her hairpins and one silver slipper. When she saw Mickey she beckoned him to join. But Mickey shook his head. He knew something of Jong-Keena, an ancient game of the Orient designed to achieve much the same end as strip-poker but with much more fun in the intervening process, and he wasn't surprised when Nadine Allis came and asked them, very prettily, not to play.

Mickey went away and danced once with Lois Larribee, who was the very latest thing in screen beauties. He liked the feel of her in his arms, as though she wasn't there at all, and yet he was always conscious of her nearness.

But when he had left her, he felt suddenly very unhappy.

For it just happened that Mickey Reid was one of those men who desire the One Woman. There was nothing of the Turk about Mickey Reid. He had never lacked women who were willing to love him and he had loved a few of them, between Friday and Monday, or between darkness and dawn.

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But deep down somewhere, away from the eyes of the world and the thoughts of men, was a dream of what love must be like when it was really love. Mickey was wise enough to know that he hadn't yet tasted love. And so, as he left Lois Larribee, he was yearning to find that One Woman whom he had never seen and who would answer this question that Lois had put into his heart.

Life is such a good stage manager, when it chooses.

It was exactly at this moment that the saxophones began to play a rag that was famous when ragging was permissible only in dives and other places even more unmentionable. It had been written by an entertainer out on San Francisco's beach, and this negro orchestra knew how to play it. The banjo came thrumming like the note of a tom-tom. The drum rolled in waves. And above them, the saxophones called their primitive, elemental song.

It caught the crowd instantly, and they surged to the windows—a crowd laughing now at anything, dizzy with wine and hilarious with excitement.

The French windows from the drawing-room and the dining-room had been flung open. A spotlight, glaring yellow, green, purple, plunged down into the patio which expert hands had quickly transformed. It was no longer an exquisite garden about a fairy pond. It was the back room of a San Francisco den.

A man and a girl came swiftly from the shadows and stood poised, haughty and indifferent. They were not looking at the crowd. They were looking at each other.

Everyone knew the man. Frisco was a Hollywood character. If he looked a trifle unusual, it was because of the tight-fitting checked suit and the brown derby. Furthermore, he carried a cane.

Nobody knew the girl.

All they could see of her was a startling mass of hair, hair like an autumn leaf, into which the gleaming spotlight poured, a little, white, indefinite face, with two long narrow eyes that glinted greenly, and a round, scarlet mouth. Under the cheap finery of an old black velvet dress, its skirt ending at the knees, its neck cut low, her body was one liquid line of grace and budding promise.

Nameless. Unknown. Her breath came in labored gasps and her hands were rigid. Yet she dominated that crowd instantly. The audience could not take its eyes from her.

It is hard to define the subtle quality that was to make and un-make Sharon Kimm. Whatever it was, beauty or sex appeal or genius or charm, Sharon Kimm had something that stopped the show every time.

"Walking the dog"—according to the most approved method of the Barbary Coast—wasn't exactly the introduction a girl might have chosen to a select and exclusive crowd of film celebrities. But it served Sharon's purpose as nothing else might have done.

The guests stood motionless, fascinated, while the two figures whirled, dipped, soared, dropped.

The music stopped. They stood bowing. Frisco was as immovable, as expressionless as some Chinese idol, but the girl with the flame-colored hair, panting with excitement and fatigue, smiled and waved her hands and tossed back her head as she looked up at them.

Mickey Reid started to applaud, as the riot of applause broke forth.

But he could not. His eyes had met the strange, eager, shy eyes of the girl who danced, met and held them. Strange, shy, hungry eyes.

His own dilated, angry, surprised. But he could not free them from hers.

Stunned, horrified, he tried to silence that whisper that was thrilling his heart until it sang in his breast.

Mickey Reid might scowl his hot young scowl, and tighten his cool young lips in disgust, and deny the beating of his heart all he dared.

It really didn't matter.

For Mickey Reid had met his One Woman.

CHAPTER VI

TWO things came into Sharon's life at the same time.

Success and Mickey Reid.

The day after the party Irving Kohl sent for her and engaged her to play a character bit in Nadine Allis's new picture.

And Mickey Reid invited her to dinner.

The character bit was a very small bit indeed. Just a dancing girl in a Paris brothel, sending her lover away to fight for France.

But somehow, people went out of the theater carrying that picture with them. And afterwards, when they heard the Marseillaise, they were apt to think of the girl's face. That scene was the match that lighted the skyrocket of Sharon Kimm's success.

The dinner was a new and tingling experience and afterwards they danced the hours away in breathless laughter.

The race was between Mickey and that glittering success: Mickey, who could offer her young laughter, and kisses, and somewhere, some day, a little home and babies and work; and success, that offered to write her name in electric lights around the globe and to give into her reckless little hands the treasure of kings and to shower her with such flattery as has cost many a queen her throne.

There was a poker game in progress at the Lodge. There usually was. Mickey could hear the clatter of chips as he went by. But he didn't stop. He had other things to think about. For once, poker didn't suit his mood.

Now the Lodge is a Hollywood institution. And like all institutions, there is much about it that is bad and a great deal that is good.

Not so many years ago, the Lodge was a respectable mansion, occupied by a respectable family whose name was in the Social Register.

Now it has become an unregenerate dwelling-place for young men with amazing vocabularies who care apparently for nothing in the world but motion pictures and making love. And since women are not admitted within its sacred portals, at least officially, these young men parade between shower baths in all states and stages of undress, keep most ungodly hours, and know about all that can be known about the world and his wife.

Life in Hollywood was a great gamble, besides being tremendous fun, and they were very happy.

Mickey Reid was beyond question the most popular man there. And it wasn't only because he could play the piano—entirely by ear and not according to any known system, but sufficiently well to keep the Lodge supplied with its favorite jazz. Nor that he sang. He did sing. But it was his repertoire rather than his art that made him successful. Most of the songs he sang have never been published and it is to be hoped they never will.

And when the gang tired of the old verses, they gathered about Mickey's battered piano and wrote new ones to fit the Hollywood dirt of the moment.

They had, for example, evolved fifty-seven verses—by design—to Mr. Kipling's famous poem which begins, "I've taken my fun where I've found it," and ends with, "And I learned about women from her." The fifty-seven were possibly not up to the literary standard of Mr. Kipling's original creation, but they were pointed and pungent and would have astounded certain bright and shining stars of Hollywood who considered themselves people of importance.

They were all amazingly young, the inhabitants of the Lodge. They had come from the four corners of the globe to seek their fortunes in Hollywood, the land of the new gold rush. And they worked as press agents and free-lance scenario writers, assistant directors and cameramen, gag men and art directors, cutters and technical experts. From their ranks had emerged some of the great men of the industry. Life was good and they could talk endless shop, love many women, play much poker and work harder than



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"I thought it would interest you to know that on Sept. 15th, I received Oakland, California, on my two tube Crosley 51. That station is 2,434 miles from here. I had a hard time making my friends believe it until I wrote to California and had them verify what I heard. As soon as I can afford it, I expect to get a Tridyn."

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"I'm getting stations from New York to Seattle, Wash. on my Tridyn, Monday night, Oct. 13th, I received clearly and plainly the announcer and music from Honolulu, Hawaii, 7,000 miles away. My machine is not for sale.

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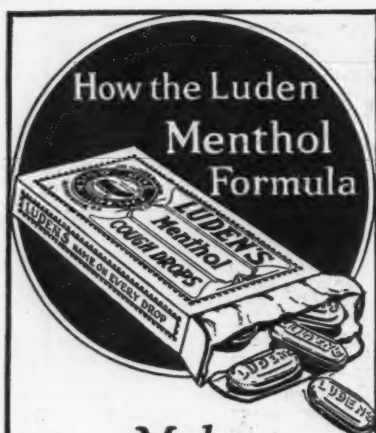
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ditch diggers, all with a clear conscience.

Mickey came into his room softly, because he was still thinking about the way Sharon's upper lip drew back from her teeth and remembering how very little she felt in his arms on the dance floor. He had never held her in his arms anywhere else. Mickey had been a bold wooer—until the One Woman came along.

Stud, his roommate, glanced up and went on sketching a great, green cathedral window with the only hand the Germans had left him.

"Well," he said at last, "well, my young Lochinvar, you're back from the wars, I see. Moreover, I observe the long, golden hair upon your coat sleeve which has been such a help to dramatists and vaudeville teams. 'Tis well, my son. A long life has taught me that there are only two things worth while in this world—women and fighting. Didn't somebody say that?"

"Probably," said Mickey, "it sounds like one of those things that gets said every few years. Napoleon might have said it at Elba, for all I know. Why aren't you playing poker like a Christian instead of pretending to be artistic at this hour of the night?"

"Because, my son, I have work to do. Great work. More than that, they sent me to the cleaner's last night. One dollar and forty cents stands between me and starvation until next Wednesday."

Mickey went over to the window, caught by that hot, blue sky, with the orange stars so close that you could almost reach out your hand and touch them. A night that looked hot and yet was impishly cool. By the window, he discovered another man, hidden in the big chair, his feet on the sill.

"Hello, I say," said Mickey Reid, "it's Rhiney. Back from the seven deserts. Back from the great open spaces where men are men. How's the greatest picture ever made progressin', young feller?"

The man in the chair grunted, without taking his pipe from between his teeth.

"Don't be rude, de-ah," said Mickey, grinning at him. "Didn't you confide to me in a moment of alcoholic enthusiasm, that this was going to be the greatest production ever filmed? I merely ask."

"I did," said Rhiney sheepishly, "and you've given me plenty of cause to regret it. Hell, I don't know why it is that when you're working on a picture you get hooked with the idea it's so darned good. At that some of this stuff'll knock your eye out. We got five thousand cattle in one stampede and it's going to be magnificent."

"Bah," said Stud, selecting a black crayon and waving it loftily in the air, "what's the good of five thousand cattle? The darn things always kick up so much dust you can't see anything. Personally, I hear you've got three hundred thousand feet of film and about half a reel of picture."

"That's a lie," said Rhiney, calmly; "and by the way, I'd like to know how you know so much about cattle pictures. You're supposed to be an effete art director for designing boudoirs for ladies to sin in."

"Nice grammar," said Stud, bringing out the green window with a swift, hard circle of black, "but I will pass that. I know something about everything which is more than can be said for most of you, who don't know anything but pictures and don't give a whoop. You have no perspective. That's what's the matter with motion pictures."

"I knew you were a lot of silly asses to go pirooting down to Texas—of all places—to get stuff you could get better between here and San Diego. So does everybody else. Nothing in Texas looks as much like Texas is supposed to look as the Miller and Lux ranch, right in California."

Mickey had gone to the piano and he began to play—tricky jazz chords, that melted into one another in a way that did something to his nerves. After all, what did these things matter? His eyes were upon the skyline outside his window—the low, broken skyline. He was part of it—the Hollywood night. Behind those

curtained windows, he could imagine a thousand love stories whispered. Old secrets made new. And he was part of it.

He shut his eyes and the flame of autumn-leaf hair that had been so close to him as they danced came out of the blackness.

"All right, all right," Stud's voice went on, somewhere in the distance, "we're all agreed. She spent thirty thousand bucks on a big ball-room set—I spent days working on it, and it was a lulu—and then they snip the whole thing out and leave it laying on the cutting-room floor."

Mickey's hands crashed in a chord. The cutting-room. The red flag to the whole Lodge, to the whole industry. The little dark room where they took the film, the thousands upon thousands of feet of film that had been shot, and selected the seven or eight thousand feet of it to make the finished picture. The room with its long tables and wheels of film and endless giant scissors, and the cement floor always littered with narrow, shining, black ribbons of film that have been consigned forever to oblivion.

"Well," said Mickey, to the accompaniment of seductive and insinuating blues, "I did a whole picture as leading man a while ago and when they released it there wasn't even a long shot of me in it. Let's do a little ballad entitled, 'The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor.'"

He struck a preliminary chord and with a running fire of helpful suggestions from his audience, sang:

Ambition lured me onward,
But I'll trust it nevermore.
It broke my heart and made me
Just a face on the cutting-room floor.

I gave my all, my all-in-all,
My heart is very sore.
'Cause all I got in exchange for it
Was my face on the cutting-room floor.

I thought to be a wondrous star
Whom millions would adore.
How can they learn to love me
With my face on the cutting-room floor?

They went into roars of laughter over it and Mickey sang it again in profane imitation of a certain ingénue who had asked him to kiss her at a dance one night and cut him dead on the Boulevard the next day.

There was much more conversation in the same vein. They always talked pictures. A record of the conversation for a week wouldn't have betrayed a thousand words on any other subject. But that wasn't peculiar to the Lodge. Hollywood in general is afflicted the same way.

Some of the poker players drifted in. But Mickey had gone back to the piano and was feeling among the worn keys for something to answer the longing in his heart.

He found it.

There was a pause, a startled pause, in the room behind him. Stud took up a purple crayon with a reflective air and Rhiney removed his feet from the window sill, that he might turn and gaze.

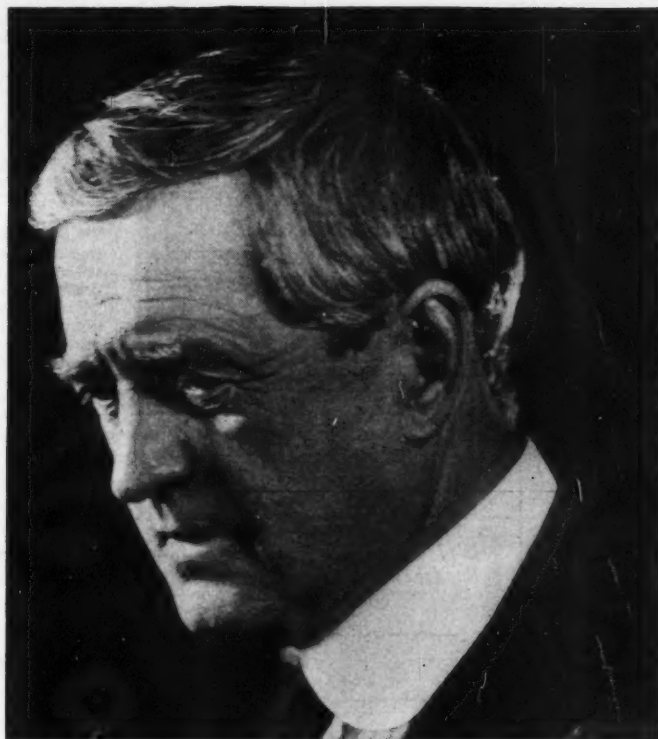
"My God," said a drawling voice in the doorway, "Mickey's playing 'Roses of Picardy.'"

"He's in love," said Stud, casually. "He'll be playing 'Love Me and The World Is Mine' in a minute."

"Is he really in love?" said Rhiney. They talked as though they had forgotten Mickey's presence, but as a matter of fact every eye was upon the fine shoulders bent above the keys. "Who is she?"

"A red-headed extra girl with green eyes who buys her clothes from the Savage comedy wardrobe, I should judge. I can conceive no other place where they could be procured."

Mickey was turning a slow scarlet behind the ears, but he dared not speak. It was the unwritten law. Unless you were actually in love, the marrying, forever-and-ever kind of love, you must take their gags, or they'd nail you to the cross.



It set him thinking

HERE, right in the prime of his business career, he had fumbled the biggest deal he ever had undertaken. It was the great disappointment of his life. And now he was putting himself through a rigorous self-examination, trying to fathom the reason for his failure.

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Roses will die in the summer time,
When our paths may be far apart.

If he stopped now they would only rag him worse. They'd think they had captured his goat and would act accordingly.

"What's her name?" asked Rhiney. "I haven't associated with anything but sand and rattlesnakes in so long I don't know a thing about who's kissing who any more."

"Her name," said Stud, blocking in purple velvet curtains with a deft touch, "is Sharon Kimm, I believe, and—"

That Stud's last judgment is right, Hollywood soon discovers. Yet who could have predicted the amazing adventures in store for Sharon Kimm? Fate is planning a gorgeous future for this girl with the face men can't forget. Read the next instalment of "The Skyrocket" in the February COSMOPOLITAN.

The Shock of Success

(Continued from page 47)

been meaning to tell you something for ever so long. But I couldn't screw up courage. Archie Hunt and I— Didn't you guess? . . . Haven't you noticed anything?"

"Guessed what?" he asked in a dazed way. "Noticed what?"

She drooped her head and laughed nervously. "Archie has made me love him. We've been together such a lot. He's here tonight. I promised him I would tell you."

Jasper's face twisted into a painful smile. "Is that so?" he asked quietly.

The girl held out her hand with a little gesture of appeal.

"I tried to be loyal to you . . . My people wanted me to break with you ages ago."

"Yes," said Jasper, "I was no catch for you. They saw that!"

He spoke with irony, but not angrily.

"I'm frightfully sorry, Paul," said the girl. "I shall always remember our friendship. Your ideals and all that."

Jasper answered with a kind of quiet violence.

"Oh, damn my ideals! I wanted your love. I worked for it."

"You kept me waiting such a long time!" said Edna Marsh. "I was growing old waiting for you. Twenty-four—twenty-five—twenty-six! And of course your books never pay. They never will pay, poor old Paul! You'll always be poor—and I hate poverty. I haven't the courage for it. It's so squalid. Archie Hunt—"

"Archie Hunt is a rich man," said Jasper. "Well, of course I understand. He can afford to give you a nice home and all that. As you say, my books never will pay."

The line of his lips curved into a smile, but his eyes were moody.

"They're too quiet and high-brow," said Edna. "If you wrote something thrilling, like that book by Mark Fisher—"

"The Curse of Poverty?" asked Jasper, drawing a quick breath.

"Yes, it's wonderful—and making heaps of money, I'm told."

He seemed very much amused.

"Supposing I had written it?" he asked. "Supposing I came to you tonight, like this, in shabby clothes, and said, 'I've made a pot of money. I can afford to make a decent home for you. I can give you fame, wealth, love'—"

"Don't," said Mickey Reid. And he knew that in that one word he had gone on record.

He got up from the piano stool and stood looking at them. His dark eyes were bright with defiance, but there was a wistful droop to the corner of his smile. "I say—I'd a little rather you didn't rag about Sharon. That's the way it is, you see."

And he went out, whistling "Rose of Picardy" between his teeth.

"My God," said the drawling voice, "he means it."

"I told you so," said Stud, imperturbably. "He's only a man, after all. It comes to everyone sooner or later. God help us."

"What's she like, really?" Rhiney had actually let his pipe go out.

Stud smiled, but his heart was rather sick because he loved Mickey more than any man he had ever known. "Between you and me," he said, "she's a poor little guttersnipe, and she wears her clothes as though somebody had stood across the room and thrown them at her, but I'm afraid she's the kind of a girl men remember."

(To be continued)

what then? What would be your answer?" She put her hand on his sleeve.

"Paul! I know it's cruel. I feel a little beast. But let me off, won't you? It's not your poverty that frightens me away. Not altogether. It's Archie. We've found out that we're made for each other. I'm desperately sorry."

There was a noise of voices outside the room. The guests were going upstairs. The girl glanced towards the door uneasily. Jasper heard Archie's voice, laughing.

"Yes," he said, "you ought to be going back to them. I'm in the way. I called—too late."

He stood with his head bowed, rather broken, and the girl looked at his shabby figure with pity in her eyes.

"Here's the ring you gave me," she said, in a low voice. "It's hateful to give it back. The little ring which cost you so much."

"It cost part of my soul," he said. "All the profits of my best book which nobody read. Not even you!"

She slipped the ring off her finger and held it out to him, her eyes dim with tears for a moment, and he took it and let it drop on the carpet at her feet.

"Kiss me," she said. "For the last time, Paul."

She came close and held her face up to him, but he took her hand and raised it to his lips. Then he gave a kind of hard sob, and strode out of the room and into the hall.

"Your hat and stick, sir," said the butler.

Yes, to be sure. He might as well take his hat and stick. They were too shabby to leave about in a rich man's house.

He walked up Ennismore Gardens with two words singing through his brain. "Too late . . . Too late . . ." Success had mocked at him. It had come with his worst book, and in gaining a fortune he had lost a wife. One of life's little ironies, and damned funny!

He laughed mirthlessly at the humor of it. Presently he felt rather faint, so that he swayed a little and was nearly run over by a taxicab. Perhaps the shock of success had been too much for him. Or perhaps he was merely hungry! He smiled again at that thought. Hunger was stronger than sentiment, and he hadn't eaten a thing since breakfast. . . . He felt in his pocket and found eighteen pence. The author of "The Curse of Poverty" had no more than that in ready cash. Well, it was

enough to get a meal, and he turned into a cheap-looking restaurant near Knightsbridge, and after a careful study of the menu ordered liver and bacon. He could just afford that, with twopence for the waiter.

Perhaps the liver and bacon was bad. Or perhaps the shock of success, or love's failure, or wounded pride, had poisoned his system. He awakened in bed that night with a touch of fever. By the next night he was delirious, and a doctor called in by Vicary Brent spoke the words "ptomaine poisoning."

"He'll want a nurse," said the doctor.

He was a doctor in a poor district, and not doing well himself. A hint of anxiety came into his eyes as he glanced round Jasper's bed sitting-room and asked a question of young Brent.

"I suppose he can afford a nurse's fees?"

"His people are well-to-do," said Brent. "I'll let them know."

Before the nurse came Peggy Sheldon took turns with Vicary Brent at Jasper's bedside. There was nothing to do except watch his flushed face and listen to his wild delirious talk. In his delirium he was possessed with the fixed idea that he had become very rich and famous. He conjured up visions of all the splendid things he was going to do with his money. Peggy heard her name mentioned many times though he did not recognize her standing by his bedside.

"Peggy needn't get anxious about another job. Tell her not to worry. I want her to come with me for a long holiday. Young Brent too, and the Colonel. A merry party, eh? Oh, you needn't be afraid! I'm paying. I'm disgustingly rich, and now that I'm rich I'm going to buy all the beauty of the world and give it to my friends. Not to my well-to-do family. No, not a bean. And not to Edna's supercilious crowd. I hate them all. I'm going to share my luck with poor old Bessie Belmont, and young Brent, and Peggy."

He sat up in bed, clutching at the torn old counterpane, and laughed with shrill mirth. Then he began all over again, issuing invitations, buying rich presents for his old friends. He was going to buy the world for them, the blue sea, the stars, the open fields, the charm and joy of life.

"It's extraordinarily comic," he said. "After years of failure success embraces me like a beautiful woman. 'You've got an ugly old mug,' says Success, 'but I'm going to marry you. You needn't be frightened. Nobody knows!' Yes, that's the best joke of all. Nobody knows. They won't believe it! I keep on telling them, but they won't believe. Peggy doesn't believe a word of it! Well, it's true. I'm rich! I'm disgustingly rich!"

When the nurse came, a quiet, matter-of-fact little woman, Peggy Sheldon sipped out of the room and found Vicary Brent outside, listening anxiously.

"He's talking his head off," said young Brent. "What's it all about?"

Peggy looked frightened, and here was no color in her cheeks.

"He's frightfully delirious. He thinks he's rich."

"Poor old Jasper!" said Vicary. "It's a happy kind of delirium, anyway. I wish I had ptomaine poisoning!"

Peggy burst into tears.

"He has always been so kind to me . . . My best friend."

Colonel Compton came out of his room smelling strongly of whisky, and Mrs. Megs came up from the basement.

They both asked anxiously after the health of the patient.

"High fever," said young Brent. "Pretty bad, I should say."

Poor old Bessie Belmont sent down a message by Mollie.

If Mr. Jasper needed any little comfort in the way of chicken broth, would they put it down to her account? If she could have moved her old carcass about she would have offered to nurse him.

The Colonel expressed his appreciation of Bessie Belmont's offer. He ventured to second

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it. Whatever poor dear Jasper needed must certainly be provided regardless of expense. He forgot for the moment that his credit did not go as far as the wine and spirits shop at the corner of Sloane Square, which had refused to supply another bottle of whisky until his account was settled.

Mrs. Meggs was equally generous, and on a firmer basis of actuality.

"Whatever the doctor orders, that he shall have, poor dear. I'd work my fingers to the bone for him."

Vicary Brent rang up Paul Jasper's family and was answered by a woman's voice, rather hard and unsympathetic.

"Paul Jasper? Yes, that's my brother. What's the matter?"

"Ptomaine poisoning. He's rather bad, I'm afraid."

"Have you sent for a doctor?"

"Yes, he's here now."

"Oh well, that's all right. Perhaps you will ring up again and let me know how he's getting on."

"He's very ill," said Vicary Brent. He wanted to say, "He may be dying or dead before I ring up again." There was something in that cold woman's voice which enraged him.

"It's a chill, perhaps," was the answer. "Such dreadful weather!"

Vicary Brent banged down the receiver and said, "So much for one's rich relations! They don't care a damn. They won't lift a little finger when one's down and out."

That night the doctor called twice and stayed a long time. Upstairs none of the lodgers went to bed but gathered in Bessie Belmont's room, where she made tea for them. They spoke in whispers because of the shadow of death in the house. It was as bad as that, according to the nurse. "The fever is burning him up," she said. "If we can't get his temperature down he'll be gone before the night's out." They could hear his voice talking, talking incessantly. Peggy Sheldon, wan-faced and red-eyed, slipped out of the room from time to time to listen on the landing or to get a hurried word from the nurse when she went to get water from the bathroom. Once while Peggy was out of the room, listening on the landing, the old music-hall star spoke to Mrs. Meggs about her.

"That girl is suffering torture, poor dear. She'll break her little heart if he's taken from us. She loves the ground under his feet."

"You don't say so!" said Mrs. Meggs, drawing a deep breath. "How do you know that, Mrs. Belmont?"

"I've eyes," said Bessie Belmont. "And I know what love is. Lord, I've had more experience than most, though I say so as shouldn't."

"We all know it," said the Colonel. "Love was another name for Bessie Belmont. In the nineties, when men knew how to love and life was good."

"Well," said Bessie Belmont, with a blush mantling her large moonlike face, "we won't tell old tales, Colonel. Not tonight, with that poor boy lying at death's door. It don't seem decent, though I'm glad of my memories."

"Well, he's happy, anyhow," said Mrs. Meggs, tearfully. "If one must be delirious it's nice to believe oneself rich."

Vicary Brent spoke some quiet words. "It will make the waking rather tragic . . . if he gets well again. I shall hate to tell him that all his dreams are false."

That was what happened. That was what saddened the friends of Paul Jasper when the delirium passed from him and he was out of danger. For ten days afterwards he was very weak and could not lift a hand from his counterpane, though he was tranquil and cheerful and spoke quietly to these friends who came into the room to keep him company. But they were distressed because the idea which had possessed him in his delirium did not leave him in convalescence. It was not so wildly expressed, but it was even more pathetic because of his quiet cheerfulness. They hated to disillusion him.

It was to Vicary Brent that he first spoke of financial matters.

"I'm afraid this illness of mine must have cost a pretty penny," said Jasper. "I'm not worrying about myself. I can afford it now that I've made so much money. But I can't sponge on all you good friends while I'm waiting for all that ill-gotten gold of mine."

Vicary Brent was silent. How could he break the dreadful news to this poor fellow that there had been no truth in all his dreams?

Jasper saw the troubled look on his face. "I told you, didn't I?" he said feebly. "I'm the author of that book 'The Curse of Poverty.' It's made a pile of money. Too much. But it will help me to pay back for all your friendship. I want to share my luck with all my pals."

Vicary Brent said "That's all right, old man," and then was silent again.

He wondered whether Jasper's illness had permanently affected his brain. This was a new delusion about 'The Curse of Poverty.' Perhaps he had read the book just before his illness. A jolly good book too! A million times better than anything poor old Jasper could write. What a pathetic idea! How cold and sad would be the awakening to truth!

To Peggy also he spoke of his good luck. Being out of a job she was able to spend much time with him after the nurse had gone, and indeed took the woman's place, and was more comforting to the patient. For hours she sat by his bedside while he held her hand, and sometimes caressed it feebly, and spoke now and then.

"Peggy," he said one day, "I've been turned down by that girl of mine. You remember? I told you I was engaged."

"Yes," said Peggy, veiling her eyes with her long lashes.

"She was tired of waiting for a failure. It looked as if I could never provide her with a decent home. There was another fellow—Archie Hunt—who was more attractive and quite well off. Well, I don't blame her. And perhaps it was a lucky escape for both of us. I wasn't her sort, really. Nor she mine, now I come to think of it—after this illness. But it was queer that she turned me down just as success came. Ironical that! On the very night when I knew that I was going to be a rich man!"

Peggy Sheldon was silent, as young Brent had been. She was glad, strangely and wonderfully glad that Jasper was no longer engaged. But she was frightened by that harking back to delirium . . . to that fixed idea of being rich.

He perceived all this disbelief at last, and made no further effort to convince them.

When he was stronger he took a cab to the City and opened a bank account with a check for five hundred pounds, which had lain unopened in its envelope during the first part of his illness. But he said nothing to his fellow lodgers about that marvelous event in the history of an author. They were rather surprised when he made a number of expeditions in taxicabs, and believed that his family must have sent him money at last. They were also a little distressed when he left the lodging house for a week without letting them know his whereabouts. After all their sympathy it seemed unkind and secretive. Even Peggy felt hurt, and during his week of absence went about with a white face and somber eyes. She had answered some advertisements for typist-secretaries and at the end of the week was offered a position with a firm of merchants in Leadenhall Street at a few shillings less than her old salary.

"I've got a new job," she told Jasper when he came back that evening, looking more like his old self, and with a brighter light in his eyes.

"I wouldn't take it if I were you," he said quietly. "I've found a much better billet for you. In the country. With a friend of mine. An author fellow who has a nice old house and a wonderful garden with clipped hedges and all the flowers that Shakespeare loved. He wants someone to help him with his work, and play tennis with him when he gets bored, and

water the flowers now and then. He's a queer sort of fellow with an ugly mug, but easy-going and quite tame."

"It sounds wonderful," said Peggy. "I adore the country . . . but all the same—"

She did not tell him that she would hate to leave the lodging house and lose his company.

"We might jog down tomorrow and have a look at it," he said casually. "A kind friend has put a car at my disposal. A four-seater. We'll take poor old Bessie for a drive—she hasn't left her room for eighteen months."

There was quite an excitement in Royal Avenue, Chelsea, when the four-seater appeared outside the lodging house and when Mrs. Meggs and young Brent lifted Bessie Belmont out of her wheeled chair and put her in the back seat next to Peggy.

Jasper sat next to the driver who seemed to be a friend of his, having served with him in the Great War. On the way out of London they talked of the old days in the trenches, and exchanged reminiscences about the places in which they had been most frightened. In the back seat Bessie Belmont sat looking very like a royal duchess of extra large size, squeezing Peggy Sheldon into a narrow space so that she could hardly be seen. The spirit of youth came back to the old lady at the sight of green fields and leafy lanes and wild flowers in the hedge-rows. She startled some passing rustics by bursting into song in a rich contralto. It was a song that had been very popular in the nineties, when Bessie Belmont was Queen of the Music Hall stage.

"Daisy, Daisy,
Give me your answer, do,
For I'm half crazy
All for the love of you!
It won't be a stylish marriage,
For we can't afford a carriage,
But you'd look sweet upon the seat
Of a bicycle made for two!"

Jasper was somewhat embarrassed by this departure from conventional behavior in a four-seater car, and begged Miss Belmont to restrain her happiness on the outskirts of the next village.

"We've got to try and look respectable here," he remarked. "This is where my friend lives, and where I hope Peggy will get a job she likes."

They drove through an old-fashioned gateway with a little white lodge on one side of the carriage drive.

"If only I could end my days in a place like that!" said Bessie Belmont. "Look at that wisteria over the porch! It's like the cottage in 'The Babes in the Wood' when I played Principal Boy at Birmingham. I'd sit at the window and make love to the birds. As happy as the day's long."

Big tears began to drop down her rouged cheeks at the thought of the cramped little room which caged her soul in Royal Avenue.

"I wouldn't be surprised if I could arrange it for you," said Jasper. "It's empty now, and that friend of mine hasn't any use for it. He'd love to have you there."

Bessie Belmont was unbelieving.

"The man's crazy!" she cried. "He's stuffing us up with fairy tales. Well, let's make believe until we get back. Peggy my dear, that's my little cottage. I want you to come to tea with me. There's honey and fresh made bread, and strawberries from the garden. Knock at the door and pull the latch, and come straight in!"

The car swung up the drive, and stopped outside a little old house with a low roof and white plastered walls through which old beams showed black. There was honeysuckle outside the porch, and below the mullioned windows there was a riot of old-fashioned flowers.

"Elizabethan," said Jasper. "Think of all the dear folk who lived here and crossed this threshold . . . Do you like the look of it, Peggy?"

Peggy Sheldon thought it too beautiful for words. But she was nervous because of that

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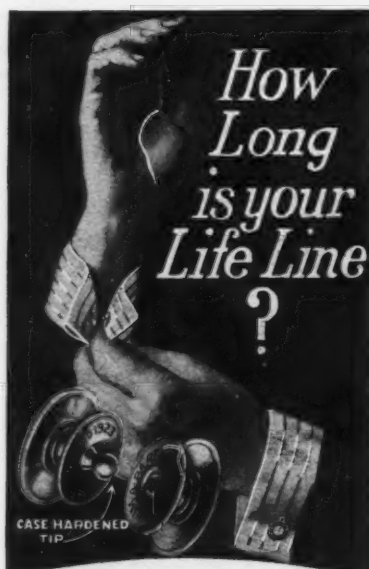
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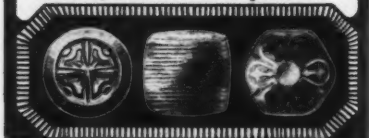
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author who wanted a typist-secretary and someone to play tennis with him. He might be horrible.

Jasper led her inside the house while Bessie Belmont sat in the car waiting for them. It seemed that the owner of the house was not at home yet. Jasper seemed to know his way about. He went into every room, pointing out the old beams, the ingle nooks, the low ceilings, the casement windows, the old oak furniture, the grandfather's clock.

Every now and then he turned to Peggy and said, "How do you like it?"

She loved it. She thought it all enchanting. But it was queer the owner was not at home. Didn't he expect them? Jasper hadn't told her the author's name. Was he a famous man?

Paul Jasper revealed a secret. "It's the author of that ridiculous novel, 'The Curse of Poverty.' You know! By Mark Fisher. The man who ought to have been shot for writing such piffle."

Peggy Sheldon laughed at him. "You're prejudiced! . . . You're jealous

of him! I think he must be a fine man. Only a good man could write a book like that."

"He's an ugly devil, anyhow," said Jasper. He looked at Peggy with a strange twisted smile.

"Peggy," he said quietly, "I'm sorry you like that book. It's bad art. But I'm glad you like the mind behind it. It happens to be my mind, and this house is mine, and the little cottage by the gateway, and that old garden which looks so pretty through the casement windows. I'm going to give the cottage to Bessie Belmont. I'd like to see her there making love to the birds. They'll think she's the setting sun. And if you want a job in life, this house is yours, and all my love. We could make life a good game together in that garden out there . . . and forget 'The Curse of Poverty'! . . . Don't you believe me?"

No, she didn't believe him, even then. It seemed too good to be true. It was the dream of delirium still haunting him. Things don't happen like that in real life—except now and then. But it happened to Peggy.

Katharine Newlin Burt tells a thrilling story of a western homesteader—"The Loneliest Man Alive"—in the next COSMOPOLITAN.

What's In My Name

(Continued from page 25)

are March, June, September and December—the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th month—the last because the two figures in 12, added together, total 3.

Now about your given name. The name you should have, the name that harmonizes with you, is arrived at in this fashion: The letters of the alphabet are divided into groups of nines; the number ten, composed of 1 and 0, sums up simply as one. A letter takes its number from its alphabetical position; you count as far as 9, then start over again. Thus *d* would be 4, *h* would be 8, *n* would be 5—well, you get the idea.

We might try out a name or two, by way of illustration. Take the name MARY. You will find, after careful counting on your fingers, that *M* is 4; *A* is 1; *R* is 9; *Y* is 7. Their sum is 21. You add the digits of 21, as you remember, and you get 3 as the result. "MARY" therefore sums up to 3. And it is, on that very account a name admirably suited to those of the Air Concord, the three, six, nine people.

If MARY were born on the 14th, however, she would not be ideally named, because, as we have seen, the figures in 14 totaling 5, represent the Water Concord—and the figures in MARY'S birthday should sum up as 3, 6 or 9.

Or take JOHN, if you want to go out after the boys' vote. *J* is 1; *O* is 6; *H* is 8; *N* is 5. Their sum is 20. Well, there's a little trick about 20; it resolves itself, when you add its digits, into a mere 2, for the naught means nothing, as any schoolboy can tell you. "JOHN" sums up to 2. So it is a very good name for men of the Fire Concord—those whose birthday numbers add up to 2, 4 or 8.

Your first name—and that is the only one that counts, all family pride to the contrary—if made up of those letters which are your special ones, becomes a name individual to you. You don't rise in recognition of the names Thomas Wilson or Hiram Grant. But when they called themselves Woodrow and Ulysses—well, you see what I mean. I think, really, that we so often forget people's names because a name is so impersonal, a thing which is shared among so many. It is frequently merely a matter of vogue; when I was christened, little girls by the drove were being named Marjorie and Dorothy; later, there was a rush of Barbaras and Glorias; now the fashion, as in clothes, has turned to the smartly simple, and there are shoals of Janes and Joans and Peggies and Sallies. There are few things so

lacking in individuality as given names. It is Chesterton, isn't it, who says that you never know a person if you know his name.

The Indians had an idea that will well bear looking into when they called one another by names expressing personal characteristics. It would lead, I suppose, to embarrassment if it were adapted to present day social intercourse; it might lead to quite a bit of feeling if you went about addressing acquaintances as Mrs. Henna-in-the-Hair or Mr. Much-Too-Many-Highballs. It is easier and pleasanter and equally expressive to name ourselves scientifically.

One more point. Nine being a key number in numerology, each letter of your given name influences you for a period of nine years.

Returning to the name MARY, the chances are that during her first nine years of life, the fates might be unfavorable, for *M*, the first letter in her name, is represented by 4, of the Fire Concord, and she belongs in the Air Concord. During her third nine years, however—from the age of 18 to 27—she should be happy and successful because her third letter, *R*, is 9, belonging to her own group of numbers. When you come to the end of the name, you go back to its beginning and repeat.

And that, I think, just about cleans up that. Now we can get back to me, as quickly as possible.

It was the woman who told me of numerology who advised me, as gently as she could, to give up the stage. She said I would never amount to much as an actress. This made the opinion unanimous, and I returned to my less glamorous but more reliable drawing. Unfailingly I followed her advice; I submitted drawings only on those dates that were right for me, set prices that contained or were made up of the numbers that governed me. I find I still do it, often, from force of habit.

My given name rather bewildered her. "That *M*," she said. "That *M*. It is bad for you. It presses on your throat."

Well, ever since my early childhood, I had had sharp attacks of laryngitis occurring, with admirable regularity, every year. And since I changed my name, I haven't had them, that's all. Of course, it may be merely coincidence—good old coincidence, always ready to shoulder the responsibility. And then, on the other hand—

There were various names that would have been suitable for me, but none of them seemed

to extend any special appeal. I found my adopted title, eventually, in New Jersey, where so many little things are picked up.

I was at a house-party, at the Davenport place in Red Bank. Mr. Davenport had had sent to him, by some grave Oriental dignitary, a string of glorious Arabian horses. Among them was a shining black mare, as swift as a breeze and as capricious; I saw her first as she ran lightly and soundlessly through the dusk, a slim Arab boy on her satin back—it remains the most beautiful picture that my memory can show me. I asked the mare's name. And as perhaps you have guessed by this time, it was Neysa.

Because of that swift, sharp vision, the very name was glamorous and romantic to me. I found from my mentor that the letters which formed it were suited to me, and I appropriated it as my own. And I doubt if I could, even trying with all my strength, have selected a name that could have been more often mispronounced.

I have grown almost pitifully used to it now. I am so often addressed as Nayza McMyne that I answer with polite promptness to it. I used to explain, apologetically, that both my names were pronounced with long *e* sounds, Neesah McMeen—if it was all the same to the speaker. But I have about given up the struggle. A once proud spirit lies crushed and broken. After countless unequal battles over the telephone and on my shopping tours, I reply gratefully to whatever they choose to call me. Even curious printed versions of my poor name no longer stir me. Only once, when I saw in a German newspaper sent me by an over-thoughtful friend, that I was referred to as the American artist, Mr. Neuter McNeil, did I feel the sharp pangs of injustice.

I don't mean to boast, but I doubt if any one has suffered more for the sake of a name than I. I come, as you may recall, from a small town, and when I went back to visit it, the local wits had a regular field day over my change of title. In Quincy, a beautiful clubbiness binds the inhabitants together; when I got on a streetcar, the conductor would greet me with a casual, "Hello, Marjorie." Somehow it got round that I had taken my new name from a horse—well, you can see where that would lead to. One of the favorite rogueries was to call in the faithful family Fido as I passed, for fear I would lift his name from him. But I went calmly, or at least pretty calmly, on, insisting upon being called Neysa. And, with the exception of several thousand people back home, Neysa I am called to this day.

Many women have confided to me that they dislike their first names and would delightedly change them, if only their husbands would sympathize with the movement. I can only ask those ladies to drop around at the apartment any afternoon after five and meet the groom. You can always draw a hearty laugh from him by mentioning the word "numerology" in his hearing.

It is not vitally important, the timid may be glad to learn, to wear one's adopted name publicly. You may think of yourself by the new title, or use it aloud only in converse with sympathetic souls. Mary Pickford, for instance, has had a numerological name worked out for her. But as you can see for yourself, it would be hardly the practical thing for her to insist on its use in her advertising.

There are a surprising number of people who shrink with happy laughter over my change of name; only more surprising are the numbers who admit a desire to go and do likewise. And both factions ask me the same thing. Do I really feel that when I changed my name, I altered the whole course of my life? To them all, I return the same answer. It is, in so many words, as follows:

Yes.

"Clear of the Law"—a moving story of a mother's courage and self-sacrifice—by Mildred Cram in COSMOPOLITAN next month.



NEIGHBORS

When Ephraim Crosby made a clearing far out on Valley Road and built his house, he had no neighbors. He lived an independent life, producing on the farm practically all that his family ate and wore. Emergencies—sickness and fire and protection of his homestead from prowlers—he met for himself. Later he had neighbors, one five and another eight miles away. Sometimes he helped them with their planting and harvesting, and they helped him in turn. Produce was marketed in the town, twenty miles along the cart-road.

Today Ephraim Crosby's grandchildren still live in the homestead, farming its many acres. The next house is a good mile away. But the Crosbys of today are not isolated. They neighbor with a nation. They buy and sell in the far city as well as in the county-seat. They have at their call the assistance and services of men in Chicago or New York, as well as men on the next farm.

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A Man at the Crossroads

(Continued from page 39)

liked him the best, Alex hadn't the right tuh be sore at him. But hadn't he? A real friend wouldn't've tried tuh steal Alex's girl. Aw, well, it'd come to a fight. Gus tensed his great muscles. Alex was heavier but the youngster knew that he could whip him. He was quicker than Big Alex and he was in good trim. Funny how he never thought about Fifi any more; Hilda was all he dreamed of; she charmed him—like a snake. Tonight, she'd promised to meet him on the beach. They'd go for a walk, perhaps. Oh, the golden hair of her!

Just before Gus swung down from the tree the thought came to him that this would be a good place to hide the little tin cases of opium. Sure; it was a good hunch. He pulled out his jackknife and commenced to clear the small hollow at the base of one of the branches. Later he went to the cabin and fetched the tins and hid them carefully in the hole that he had enlarged to contain them. He covered the place with moss and breathed a sigh of relief when he went back to the cabin. If the fly-cop should happen along now he'd find nothing to satisfy his suspicions.

At noon Alex came in. He had signed for a new berth on a coastwise lumber schooner that would bring him into Seattle about every two weeks. No more long voyages now that he was soon to be married. For a prospective bridegroom, Alex did not seem happy. There was a frown upon his usually kind face; he had but little to say. Gus talked easily of nothing much; Big Alex finally broke in upon his monologue.

"Today I saw Red Hanson. He goes out mate of the Mary L. that sails fer Singapore tomorrow at daylight. He was askin' me did I think you'd sign up. They need hands."

"What, me? Sign on Cap'n Bully Hanson's bucket o' scrap? Say, I wouldn't ship with that ol' cannibal if I never had another berth. Yuh know I'm broke. I got tuh see Charlie 'fore I pull out o' here. An' then I'm goin' tuh buy a farm up the Sound an' settle down."

Gus was glad that he had some excuse to justify him in staying on. In spite of himself it went against the grain more than he would admit to hurt Big Alex the way he had.

The older man stood for a while and fingered the fringe of the red cloth on the kitchen table; he was ill at ease. Gus had an idea of what was coming. Finally Alex spoke.

"Say, looka here—maybe yuh don't mean nothin' by it, but ye're hangin' 'round Hilda too much. We been friends fer a long time, Gus, but I won't have yuh hangin' 'round my girl the way ye're doin' it!"

"She say I was botherin' her?" Gus knew that he was being cruel; he himself was not happy, which was why he took a perverse satisfaction in torturing Big Alex.

"She ain't said nothin' but I'm sayin' it fer her. I ain't foolin' about this. The next time I find yuh around my girl I'm goin' tuh knock yer dam' head off."

"Yeah? We'll see about that when the time comes, fella. Me, I don't think yuh can do it." "Yuh've had yer warnin'. Remember it." Big Alex flung out of the door and set off in the direction of the docks.

Poor old Alex. It was a shame to worry him like this but if Hilda liked another guy better, then it was up to Alex to get out. It made a fella feel kinda rotten an' onery though; the whole thing did. Maybe it was because of the smuggled opium an' Chinnee Charlie not bein' in town an' all, that caused him to feel so depressed. 'S far as that went, he hadn't been happy since he'd sailed from Surabaya. He wondered how Fifi was getting on; was she missing him or did she despise him for the way he'd treated her?

He caught up his cap and went out into the sunlight; he'd walk up to the little group of stores before the docks and buy some tobacco

and maybe shoot a game of pool. He was gettin' awful sick of this layin' around doin' nothin'; he wasn't no loafer by choice. He smiled up the rustic flight of steps to the big maple before he turned down the path toward the beach. He was glad that he had found that hiding-place for the tins. He felt more secure than he had in days. Charlie was bound to return soon and then all of his troubles would be over.

A high wind was whipping through the trees and in the bay the waves tossed in mounds and flecked up ruffles of foam at their crests. The sky shone brilliantly blue; it was a day that sent the blood tingling through a man's veins. It lent a feeling of excitement to his thoughts. As he passed the row of cottages above the tide-line, Hilda came down to the rickety gate and waved a greeting.

"Was you goin' by an' not say 'Hello'?" she laughed.

She wore a pale-blue dress and in her hand she carried her hat with its wreath of pink cotton roses about the crown. The colors set off well her yellow hair; Gus's eyes flashed at the picture that she made. Funny how his heart beat when she narrowed those pale-blue eyes at him; they told him strange things her lips didn't say. He was gone on her all right; he guessed this was his golden girl, for sure.

"I was on my way tuh the store fer some tobacco an' a game o' pool, maybe. But now I got somethin' better tuh do, eh?"

"Go on. I ain't wantin' to keep you. On the way to the grocer's myself. Do you mind if I walk along with you?" She stepped through the gate; the wind caught at the blue dress and it swept and circled about her so that she seemed to float at his side. They walked in silence for a while.

"Goin' tuh meet me tuhnight, like yuh said, Hilda?" Gus almost whispered the words.

"Want me to? . . . Do you?" Her cool fingers slipped for a moment along the length of his big hand. His bronzed face flushed darkly.

"Lissen, Hilda. . . . Yuh ain't playin' with me, are yuh?" He stopped and stared down into the narrow eyes. The lids hid the blue quickly; she laughed her smoothly rising gurgle.

"S-a-y . . . you don't think I'd try to fool a smart fella like you, Gus? I said I'd meet you, didn't I? . . . It'll be moonlight tonight . . ."

"I don't feel right about Big Alex, Hilda. . . . Say, he's my friend . . . I . . . Whyn' yuh tell him about us . . . I'll tell him . . ."

"Know what I wish?" She chose to ignore his stammering.

"Hilda, whyn' yuh let me tell Alex? When yuh goin' tuh . . ."

"Tonight, I wish . . . I wish you'd bring that pretty scarf . . . that sarong you showed me—I wish you'd bring it down to the beach. I kinda fell fer that thing. There's somethin' . . . I dunno how to say it . . . but I'd like to wear it in the moonlight. I'd like to wear it over my shoulders an' see the silver border shine in the moon. Say, you said a princess owned it once, didn't you? Bring it, will you, Gus? . . . I want it."

The big fellow stumbled along by her side; he did not answer for a few moments. He tried to remember Alex, but this girl went to his head like drink. The group of stores was in sight when he spoke.

"I tol' yuh once, Hilda . . . that there sarong's fer the golden girl who belongs tuh me. 'Member when I said that? Yuh go'n tuh give Alex his walkin' papers? . . . Yuh goin' tuh be my golden girl? Are yuh, Hilda?"

She ran a few steps ahead of him and laughed back over her shoulder.

"You bring it to the beach tonight like I said, Gus."



This is a pretty nice party. First we are to have some Baker's Cocoa and sandwiches, and then-ice-cream! Mother says Baker's Cocoa is good for everybody, 'specially children. Wouldn't you like to have some too?



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"Will, yuh promise, Hilda? Yuh goin' tuh—"

On a sudden they were stricken to uneasy silence. They had been so immured in themselves that they had not noticed when Big Alex strode down the beach to meet them. He was almost before them when they paused. He stopped a few feet away, his brows drawn into a fierce scowl that distorted his usually kindly face. Now he was mad with fury.

"Yuh know what I told yuh, Gus. Ye're a dam' cur tuh hang around my girl this here way. I'm goin' tuh make jelly of that purty face o' yours."

Gus laughed shortly and ripped off his coat. It'd come, what he'd expected.

"I guess yuh got it comin' tuh yuh, Alex. I don't want tuh fight yuh but I guess it's yer right. I stole yer girl but yuh can't blame us 'f she likes me best, can yuh? I don't—"

Big Alex sprang forward with a cry of rage. Hilda cowered before the sound. She stood rooted in her tracks. Gus laughed as the other ran toward him; he could lick Alex easily. . . . he drove a terrible blow for the other's chin that slipped the fraction of an inch and tore a slimy red mark the length of Alex's face. . . . After that came the sound of panting breaths. . . . beating, slashing smacks of fists. . . . crunching gravel. . . . and once a hoarse sob from the older man as he went down.

Gus stood over him as he was scrambling to his feet.

"I don't want tuh fight yuh no more, Alex. I—"

A blazing-eyed Hilda flung herself between them. She hung to Alex's arm; the blood dripping from his torn face stained the blue dress. . . . it slipped across her hands.

"Alex. . . ." she screamed out the words, "I don't care a hang fer him. . . . I don't care fer no one but you, Alex. I swear it. . . . I swear. . . . I wanted that there pretty scarf. . . . that sarong. . . . I don't care fer this young fool, Alex. . . . but you got tuh lick him. . . . hear me, you got tuh. You lick him or I'm through with yuh. . . . I won't see my man beat. . . ."

She was sobbing in racking gulps that tore out of her small throat.

"He said he'd give me the scarf if I'd meet him on the beach t'night. . . . but I won't, Alex. . . . I don't care fer him. . . . on'y don't you let him lick you. . . . don't you dare tuh let him. . . ."

The two men stood staring at each other over the girl's head. Big Alex's bloody face was terrible to behold. . . . Gus was white to the lips. The older man tried to push the girl away but she clung to his arm with all her might. . . . With a growl of rage he tore at her hands. . . . In the scuffle the link of his cuff caught in her hair. . . . there was a yanking pull and the soft little puffs and curls of golden glory came down and cascaded over her shoulders. . . . The two men stared stupidly for an instant. . . . Alex flung forward to battle.

Gus stood like a frozen pillar. Hilda threw herself before Alex again. Hilda. Her words were eating their way into Gus's numbed mind. Golden girl. . . . all false. . . . She'd made a fool of him. . . . made him a traitor to the best friend he'd ever had. . . . She'd wanted the sarong so she'd played him for a fool. . . . By Gawd! . . . Her unbought hair held no lure for him now. He tensed his great muscles and stood waiting. Alex threw the girl aside and was at Gus again. . . . His beaten, bloody face rushed across the space and crashed into the consciousness of the younger man. . . . Big Alex. . . . The man he'd wronged for a no-good woman. . . . His friend. . . . If he whipped him now this little blond rat'd throw Alex down. . . . Like a flash he made his big decision. . . . He took the big man's blow straight in the face and scarcely moved to defend himself.

Big Alex was mad with blood. . . . Gus felt the terrible blows again and again. . . . He swayed on wide-spread feet and took the thudding fists scarcely lifting a hand. . . .

Through his numbing thoughts one stood out clearly. . . . He owed this to Alex. . . . he had it coming to him. . . . Minutes later he swayed and fell, face forward, into the sticky gravel of the beach.

He was alone when he pulled himself dizzily to his feet; the fresh wind tore at him and helped to clear his dull mind. Alex had beat him up pretty rough, all right. He felt gingerly of his bruised face; his fingers were stained crimson when he drew them away.

In the cabin once more he tumbled into a chair and tried to think; the wind rattled at the windows and rustled the branches of the maples into a swishing tattoo; the surf pounded on the beach with a heavy beat. An old remark of Alex's that had striven to stand out in his mind through all that staggering walk down the beach, came out boldly and clearly through the mists of his consciousness.

"There's a back-hand comin' tuh yuh from life an' it's goin' tuh make a man. . . . 'r a bum of you. I wouldn't say which."

Them was Alex's very words.

He laughed; a short, bitter burst. He'd got the back-hand, all right. That was a fine way tuh treat a fella. . . . lead him on an' then throw him down. . . . The little little. . . .

Suddenly he pulled himself to his feet and his voice rang out:—"an' it's goin' tuh make a man. . . . 'r a bum of you"

By Gawd, he'd taken his licking like a man, and now he was going to take the rest like a man. So help him, if he wasn't! Sure, Alex's girl had given him the glad-eye, but did that mean that he had to get busy with her and try to cut Alex out? Would a man have done what he'd tried to do? He'd thrown down a good friend. . . . he'd fallen for that dirty dope-smuggling game. . . . and last of all. . . . he'd gone off and left a little heart-broken girl who loved him. He'd left Fifi who would've died for him if it would've helped him any. He shook with a spasm of loathing for the thing he suddenly saw himself to be. "Aw, sure, he'd know'n it for weeks, but like the yella cur he was he'd never had the gimp to face it out before. Well, he knew now. It was a bum that he'd turned out to be. . . . not a man."

He started about and faced the entrance as he heard running steps on the path. Then the door flung open and Big Alex stood panting there. His face was still sticky with drying blood.

"I—I got tuh tell yuh that I just heard the cops was after yuh, Gus. Even after what's happened, I couldn't let 'em come here fer yuh without no warnin'. They grabbed Charlie this noon an' the p'licemen on the dock told the store-keeper they found yer name on him. They been watchin' yuh fer a week on suspicion an' now they're on their way here."

They both stood for a space; Gus shook himself erect after a while and came close to the older man.

"Alex. . . . Say, fella, I done a rotten thing tuh yuh. . . . I just been thinkin' about it. . . . It just kinda happened what I did an' I ain't got no excuse, but. . . . Gawdamighty, Alex, I'm sorry."

Another silence and then—

"Why'd yuh let me beat yuh up like yuh did? You could've licked me. What'd yuh do it fer, Gus?"

The tall youngster hung his head; his words came slowly.

"Oh, I dunno. . . . I guess I kinda had it comin', to me. . . . I been a skunk, Alex. . . . It wasn't Hilda's fault."

"I seen what she's been doin'. I'll know how tuh take care o' her when we're married." The softness of old was missing from the big man's voice.

"Well, I'll beat it now. . . . Say, Alex. . . . d'yuh s'pose yuh could say yuh'd be friends again?"

Alex did not answer at first; then his hand went out and caught at the other's shoulder with an almost tender pressure.

"I guess yuh got by the turnin' point, all right, kid. I don't hold no grudge."

Gus strode across the room and slipped into

his coat and cap; he stuffed a few things hastily into his sea-bag and swung it to his shoulder. Just as he was going out the door he turned back and caught the sarong from its box. He might not get back to the house.

His heart was beating with excitement when he ran lightly up the rustic steps and swung himself and his belongings into the tree. He'd as soon the cops didn't find him at the cottage even though they wouldn't find the tael of opium there. He didn't want them trying the third degree on him.

From his vantage point he could look through the branches and up the beach; three men were almost before the cottage; a few moments later they came up the path and knocked loudly at the door. The cops, all right.

Gus laughed through his broken lips. They'd search but they'd find nothing. When Alex opened the door to them they pushed their way in. The wind tore along the rustic flight and whipped at the branches; the swishing of it deadened all sounds from the house. A while later, two of the men came out onto the porch and looked about; it was plain that they were baffled. They turned and faced the bay.

A stray branch bowed before Gus's eyes and he leaned up on his arm to see more clearly. Almost before he could realize it, the sarong slipped down from the platform and billowing out in the gusts of wind, it twisted and blew down the rustic flight.

The man's eyes started wide and he drew in his breath in a sucking gasp; every nerve was tortured in the sudden danger of his discovery. The men still stood with their backs toward him but the blowing sarong would draw their attention up the flight any instant.

His heart was pumping in heavy beats. Fascinated, he watched the sarong; like a live thing it slithered, now floated down, step by step. Like as if it were punishing him for what he'd done to Fifi . . . Betraying him. His tortured nerves gave it life . . . it was alive . . . crawling down those stairs to disclose his hiding-place . . . Fifi! Suddenly her name rang through his brain . . . As if he'd called to her for aid . . . as if his consciousness had called across the sea to hers.

Still the men did not turn. Gus had pulled himself up to his knees and the veins on his brown hands stood out like swollen thongs where he grasped a branch of the maple. Fifi! . . . Step by step the sarong billowed on . . . Fifi! . . . With a sudden flitting whisk a gust of wind caught the drapery in a graceful swooping; like a flash it was gone from the path and disappeared into the denseness of the maples. The men on the porch turned from the bay and cast their glances casually up the rustic flight; there seemed nothing to interest them in that direction. Soon after they left the cottage and started along the beach toward the mill.

Gus Lindstrom lay quietly for a while. Fifi . . . Why, the spirit of her had watched over him . . . protected him. He had come across the sea, driven by the call of his youth for a golden girl. Say, it wasn't just a matter of the color of a girl's hair; he knew that now. What a fool he'd been . . . How he'd been cheated by what he thought was real . . . the one he'd called the golden girl in his thoughts was false. Golden girl . . . why that was Fifi . . . little Fifi, waiting in Surabaya . . . Golden girl . . . not her hair but the heart of her . . . Pure Gold . . . His true love.

With an eager movement he pulled himself up. Out there at anchor rode Bully Hanson's hell-ship, the Mary L. She sailed for Singapore at daybreak . . . and from Singapore to Surabaya . . .

He swung his sea-bag to the foot of the tree and dropped down after it; he laughed as he glanced up into the branches and thought of the treasure he was abandoning there. He was through with that kind of dealing. Half-way along the rustic flight he plunged into the maple grove and found the batik sarong. Then he went on down to the beach and turned toward the float where the dory of the Mary L. waited to take aboard the new crew.



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The Intruder

(Continued from page 77)

know he is dead. If we hear of his death"—she drew in a sharp breath—"I am lost."

She sat, after this speech, with her head bent, her hands still about his arm. He was overcome with an emotion.

"That damnable brute—your husband!"

She slowly freed him and drew back in her chair.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered, youthfully embarrassed. "I'm excited. It's been an adventure for me—thrilling. I'll go now, unless you want me to patrol the house."

"To keep off—wolves? No," she said and added abruptly: "Good-by. I'm very thankful to you. I really thought that having found the gun would make him—beyond control. You ought to blame me for tricking you into what might have been a dangerous fix. But you're so young!" She sighed.

"I hope," Rossiter exclaimed boyishly, trying to express his sorrow for her, his futile impatience with her wasted capacity for feeling, "that you'll strike oil and make that fortune!"

She laughed softly.

He rode down the dark leafy lane towards his camp in sorrowful wonder at her, so absorbed that not until he had dismounted to lower the bars did he see Harvey, close beside him.

The big man had been waiting. His face in the moonlight was wan with patience. As soon as their eyes met, Rossiter had no fear of him. The eyes of Marcia's wolf were the eyes of a beaten dog.

"You're a mining engineer, aren't you?" asked Harvey. "Your work takes you in and out all over the country. You go back East."

"I'm on my way there now."

"Well, sir, I mean to ask a favor of you. Likely it's a foolish sort of favor, but I want you to keep an eye open for Mrs. Sydney's husband. As soon as the haying season's done and I've laid in my crops and put my ranch in order, I'll be taking after him myself. I'm goin' to hunt down that man." It was said quietly, almost with gentleness.

"And you want me—if I happen upon him—to point him out to you so you can come and—kill him?" Rossiter demanded dryly.

"Yes, sir," Harvey seemed to have no doubt of Rossiter's ultimate compliance. He went on. "That woman hates me. She's told me so. I guess you heard her. But, even if I can't win her, I mean for Sydney never to come back to her. He's treated her like a devil. If he came back he'd be seven devils. I had ought to save her from that."

"What does Sydney look like?" asked Rossiter. He had no intention of playing the sleuth when he put the question, which was prompted only by his curiosity.

Harvey half closed his lids. "Tall, slim, light haired, light eyed, shifty. Soft spoken. Gentleman's hands. Long nose. Short chin, short upper lip. He's got a little white three-cornered scar on his left cheek bone. He was born and reared in New York, rich folks. They paid him to keep away. You might hear something of him."

"I might. It's not very likely." Rossiter put his hand on his saddle horn to mount and gathered up his reins. The aspens whispered and the running water spoke. He fancied he could hear the laboring of this big lover's heart. Marcia Sydney's amber eyes, alight with her fanned hatred, flared painfully against his memory. If they so hurt his nerves, what must they do to the man beside him? Stab like two golden knives, no doubt. Rossiter swung up to his horse and held out his hand.

"Good-by," he said. He produced from his young experience a profound and original reflection. "Women are darned incomprehensible."

He had crushed fingers when he rode away. The night drifted back from him and gradually faded from his memory; the cañon sultry and golden, the amethystine dusk, the speaking stream; but the image of Marcia stayed

vivid and perplexing—sultry too, and golden, with darkened skin and amber eyes and soft shocks of speech, the young, passionate, deserted woman, her obstinate hatred and her fear—and that mysterious sweetness that for one instant had possessed her.

Rossiter was in and out of many corners on his way East and it was in the corner of a saloon in a Texan oil town that he happened to speak of the Deep River country. He was drinking with and talking to a fellow engineer, and it was on the theme of his prospecting that he harked back to the dimmed experience.

"That Deep River country," he said, "looks like a trap—"

A thick voice spoke behind him: "Thas—whaz—iz—a trap—trap—for a—man's—life— Nex' time you go there—look up—wife. I lev—wife—down by Deep River."

Rossiter whirled around in his chair. He never forgot, though he tried to forget, the ghost that sat there back of him, against the wall, crumpled down, its hands twitching on the table edge, momentary flicker of life in its gray long face. Hair the color of ashes streaked over the man's temples almost into his eyes, which were like the holes in a skull. The rest of the face matched the hair and was only a skin-covered bone. On this parchment surface near the cheek bone there was a vividly white three-cornered scar. The mouth, surrounded by dry and matted hair, hung open and could not shape words. The speech came from him in a hollow, unreal whispering and, after it, the flicker of sudden consciousness retreated. He drank, it is true, slowly and suckingly, but face and eyes were dead.

Rossiter strode over to the bar.

"What's that man's name?" he asked the keeper.

That cynical observer of transitory humanity turned a cold, commenting eye.

"We don't call him a man, he's a corpse. He ought to be under ground. His name's John Sydney. He came here three years ago on his way back to his wife, and here he's stayed. He gets some money from his folks and here he spends it, sits and soaks his coin's worth and gets shoved out. Back for another coin's worth tomorrow—and so on. Doc gives him about six months more. Doc says he's dyin'. I say he's dead. That, what he said to you, is the only sense he's spoken for a year. Must have been the mention of Deep River. Look at him now!"

Rossiter looked, sickly.

He went back to his former place, but this time sat so that he could watch Marcia Sydney's husband. Hour by hour lagged past that lifelessness, with its spasmodic movements of getting the liquor to its lips. Rossiter's acquaintance left him, the other occupants of the befumed, smoke-foggy room went out, noisy or silent, as their experience taught them. The barkeeper, strolling forth, made a courteous gesture of dismissal in Rossiter's direction and, stepping over to Sydney, lifted him by the collar bodily from his seat, shuffled him across the floor and pushed him not ungentily out into the night. Rossiter followed. The shivering, staggering figure circled aimlessly before them. Said the barkeep—thumbs in his vest arm holes and eyes shrewdly searching the empty street: "Boy that gets paid for taking him home ain't here. Oh—Hell! Let him sleep out!"

"I'll see to him," said Rossiter. "Where does he sleep?"

"At the hotel—reckon you're stoppin' there yourself."

Like a solid man at the side of a shadow, Rossiter walked along the bald bare street with his companion. The board pavements and low impromptu buildings were as desolate as the grounds of a deserted circus, the high oil derricks lifted themselves up about the town like watchful skeletons. Dawn had washed out the colors of night and had not yet daubed in the

warm tints of day. Sydney shambled and reeled, paused for sudden fits of blankness, and came at last to the hotel. He swayed and staggered up the stairs and got himself and his supporter to a narrow bedroom like a dingy tomb. There he laid himself on the bed and Rossiter covered him. Afterwards Rossiter went to his own room and slept ill.

In the morning he met his landlady carrying a tray in the direction of Sydney's door and, with a brief explanation of his interest, he followed her to her lodger's bedside.

The fumes of last night's stimulant must have been slept off, but the man lay before them like some terrible wax doll. It was hard to believe he had not died during the night, save that his eyes moved and he breathed through slack and shaken lips.

Rossiter bent down and spoke urgently, seeking for life in the large dull eyes.

"Marcia," he said, "at Deep River—Marcia Sydney—your wife."

"There's no manner of use tryin' to talk to him," said the weary landlady, mechanically smoothing out the dirty quilt above him, "he's not in his senses, not ever. He'll lie like that till afternoon, then he'll reach out to the tray and drink his cold coffee—takes him hours. He moves like he had a century to spend in winkin', like he lived by a diff'rent sort of timepiece from what we do. He'll take a coupla bites of bread. Then he'll get back to the saloon. He pays a boy to come for him. That is, he give me the money to hire him—before he got as bad as this."

Rossiter took the slack thin arm. "Marcia," he repeated, "Marcia . . . Marcia—Deep River—six years ago—you said it was a trap . . ."

Three words fumbled their way across the man's obstructed will, "Leave—me—alone." His lips shaped themselves at enormous intervals. He whined, jerked like a wooden figure on strings and jerked himself into his former waxen stillness.

Rossiter drew back from him, shuddering. "Yes, he's dead, memory and mind and soul—"

"And in about a couple hundred days," said the landlady with a loud professional cheerfulness, "body. And me and the saloon loses the remittance. Lucky thing he's forgotten to go back to that wife of his. Better not try to call him, mister. Think what he'd look like risin' up sudden on her doorstep—after six years—a dead man!"

It was on this phrase that Rossiter, telling his story to the fire—and me—stopped and pulled vainly at a pipe long since gone out.

"Well?" I demanded doubtfully.

"Well—I went over to the telegraph office that same morning and sent a message to Nick Harvey. 'Go ahead and marry her,' I said. 'Her husband's dead. I've seen his corpse.'"

I cried out sharply, and Rossiter looked rather scared and solemn.

"I was afraid you'd take it that way." He sighed deeply. "A man ought never to tell things to a woman. She always takes sides with his conscience."

"What did you hear from Harvey?" I demanded.

"Just one word—'Thanks.' And so," Rossiter concluded coolly, "they were married. Maybe they struck oil and maybe they didn't. Chances are against it, for my own speculation in that country turned out a total loss. Sydney must have been dead years ago. If not, they're living in sin, those two—isn't that the way the church would put it? But, in any case, they're living in a very complete, innocent and human happiness."

"But," I cried in entire exasperation, "she hated him! You delivered her into his hands. What did she tell you—if we hear of my husband's death—I'm lost!"

Rossiter chuckled.

"Oh!" he said. "Didn't you work that out? She was a conscientious little 'schoolmarm' and it would have been sinful to love one man

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when she was married to another. So, since she couldn't love him with the approval of her conscience, she hated him. She believed it herself; she'd misrepresented the big overhanging mountain to her every conscious sense, but it was the subconscious heart of her that stood

If you like ingenious tales of gentleman crooks, you'll like "High Art" by J. S. Fletcher in the February COSMOPOLITAN.

Love at First Fight

(Continued from page 59)

of the ring, bringing up against the ropes. That he was hurt was plain even to me—I shrieked with the rest of 'em, till it was days before the voice with the smile could speak above a whisper. I know that was unladylike, but really you wouldn't have blamed me if you'd been there! Shouts of "Take him, Ben!" were mingled with screaming advice to the dazed Young Farrell to clinch. Ben advanced a few steps towards Farrell and then stopped, as if waiting for his opponent to come to his senses. He turned his head and gazed at Jimmy Clinch uncertainly.

"Knock him dead—you ain't in the gym now!" screeches Jimmy.

The bedlam around the ring turned into a blare of disgust and jeers for Ben when Farrell fell forward on him, clapping him in a fond embrace. As the referee tugged 'o get them apart, Jimmy moaned that Ben had let the chance of a lifetime slip away from him by not following up his advantage when he drove Farrell across the ring. Jerry added that had Ben rushed in and landed another blow then we'd have been on our way home right afterwards.

"I think it was very manly of Ben to allow the other fellow a chance to recover!" I says. Jimmy Clinch nearly fell off his seat and both Jerry and Pete released a few peals of wild laughter.

"Hey, what d'ye think this is—a movie?" asks Jimmy. "Ben ain't in there to be manly, he's in there to slap that bum for a loop!"

I looked up at the ring again.

Young Farrell seemed to have more than recovered from Ben's terrible right hand blow, for he was now doing what Pete told me was "outsmarting" Ben. That is, he was keeping Bennie so busy avoiding punches that Bennie had no chance to hit him. Farrell was saying it with hooks, jabs, uppercuts, swings and whatnot in a mad attempt to stop Ben from doing the same. For awhile the fun waxed fast and furious and this vowed the crowd, though, really, most of these blows were cleverly blocked by the still smiling and unruffled Ben. Occasionally, Ben would lash out with his right to Farrell's face or body and when he did he rarely missed shaking him from stem to stern. Just before the bell ended the first round with the mob yowling for Ben to "Take a chance!" Ben again drove Farrell to the ropes with a crashing blow to the chin. There was much loud applause as they trotted to their corners.

Ben's seconds greeted him with a shower of water from sponges, doused over his head and chest before he sat on his stool. He took a long drink from the water bottle, peered around through the haze of tobacco smoke till he finally saw me and waved a glove at me cheerfully. I put everything I had on the smile I gave him back. His manager stepped up and whispered vigorously in his ear, while the seconds massaged his splendid body. The referee, standing against the ropes, leaned down to the reporters.

"Here's two that's tryin'!" he says, jerking his thumb over his shoulder to the ring.

"I'll say this to your gentleman friend—he can hit, Cutey!" says Jerry, in grudging admiration.

"You tell 'em!" agrees Pete. "He's a sweet puncher. He took that frame by a mile!"

Jimmy Clinch came away from Ben at this minute and sat down beside me again. He seemed greatly annoyed at something.

there for an instant before my eyes and said good-by to him. If I hadn't remembered that revelation I'd not have understood. Balked love and hatred are as like as twins, and I never saw a woman that loved a man as much as Marcia loved that patient 'wolf' of hers."

"Isn't Ben doing wonderfully?" I asked him, excitedly. "Why, really, his hair isn't even mussed. He's just playing with that fellow!"

"Playin' with him is right!" snarls Jimmy. "That's the trouble! He'll fool around in there and let this tramp take the decision away from him, instead of endin' it with a punch, like he can with that right of his. Ben's a gym boxer—not no fighter! He won't get tough for money, he's got to be mad to un-track himself. He sees this bozo's a set-up for him, so he's goin' to let him stay. This kid's no killer—he's too soft-hearted to paste 'em for the fun of it. Well, watch what Farrell does if he gets Ben in trouble!"

"What are they putting on Farrell's face?" I asked, pointing across the ring.

"Looks like vaseline," grunts Jimmy, watching. "That sometimes prevents a bad cuttin' up. I—"

But the gong cut him off!

The second round was barely half a minute old when Ben sent Farrell to the floor right above us with two fearful punches, that I wish I knew enough about this pastime to describe to you like they do in the newspapers. "How d'ye like him, Farrell?" shrielled a voice from the gallery. Evidently Farrell didn't like Ben at all, because on one knee he looked up at the referee and complained that he'd been fouled. The referee shook his head calmly and kept on counting over him, with the house a mass of lunatics.

At "eight," Farrell arose, clinched and then butted Ben with his head. Ain't we got fun? The crowd hooted and the referee spoke very severely to Farrell. Farrell held out his glove to apologize to Ben and as Ben reached forth to shake, Farrell drove an awful punch to Ben's stomach. At this deliberate piece of brutal unfairness, the crowd booed some more. Ben frowned and began driving the burly Farrell around the ring with both arms working like pistons. Honestly, Farrell seemed unable to land a solid blow on Ben, which didn't make me mad! Twice more before the round was over, Ben had him on the verge of a knockout, but each time Bennie stepped back and allowed Farrell to get his wind, as though unwilling to finish his badly beaten rival. You should have heard the thundering squawks on this from the patrons. Really, Ben's exhibition of sportsmanship seemed to have swung the noble crowd's sentiments away from him!

"Down below, Farrell—he don't like 'em in the stomach!" bawled somebody in back of me.

"He don't like 'em nowhere else, either!" snarls Jerry. "Warm Puppy, what a finisher! He don't know what it's all about!"

"I'll bet you wouldn't get in there and risk your life with that brute Farrell!" I says, boiling over.

"At's one bet you win!" returns Jerry, complacently.

During the brief rest between the second and third rounds, Ben's manager pleaded with him to knock Young Farrell out, but when Ben just grinned amiably and refused to be serious, Jimmy Clinch gave him a fearful riding. Coming back to his place beside me, James was almost weeping.

"Ben thinks this mēlée is all in fun!" he groans to me. "He won't take off the wraps and this Farrell will get the nod from the sport writers as sure as you're a good looker. They's no torture in the world which can compare with watchin' the best man lose!"

The third round was called even by the newspaper men, who appeared as disgusted as Jimmy with Ben's pacifist tactics. In this inning, Jimmy complained to the referee that Farrell's body was covered with some kind of grease that made it hard for Ben to handle him in the clinches. The referee looked Farrell over, then got a towel from one of his seconds, stopped the fight and wiped the stuff off Farrell's body, in spite of loud protests from his corner and even louder ones from the gallery. The bout then continued, with Farrell grimly trying to smack Ben for a goal and Benjamin treating the whole proceedings as if he was giving a boxing exhibition in a gymnasium. It was an honest-to-goodness battle to Farrell—a limbering up exercise to Ben! As far as skill was concerned, even Jerry and Pete admitted that Bennie was Farrell's master at every angle of the game. But Ben simply wouldn't get savage and finish his man and that's all there was to it!

In the fourth round, Young Farrell went to the front for the first time, and, really, for awhile things looked very bad for my Ben. Right after the bell, Farrell hit him with a vicious punch square on the jaw. This punch should have knocked Bennie down. It did! But even as the crowd leaped up, screaming madly, Ben was on his feet again and he looked disturbed for the first time that evening.

"Where's 'at smile now, Bennie?" howled Farrell's admirers.

Jimmy Clinch was, strangely enough, equally jubilant.

"That knockdown's just what he needed!" he yelps. "He's hurt—now you'll see if he's a fighter or not!"

The crowd implored Young Farrell to finish Ben, till, honestly, I could have murdered 'em all! More than anxious to give service, Farrell charged at Ben like a grizzly, but Ben met him half way with a couple of body blows that slowed his playmate to a walk. The instant Farrell appeared in distress again, Ben's grin returned to its old place and he eased up, deaf to the yells of the enraged spectators. This go-as-you-please attitude of Ben's encouraged Farrell to continue forcing the fighting, with the result that this round went to him by quite a margin.

As full of confidence as an aviator in an elevator, Farrell ran out of his corner at the start of the fifth round and began hammering away at Ben with the well-known and popular gusto. Ben took it all in good humor—fighting back hard in sudden flashes when he was shaken up and simply dancing around when Farrell appeared dizzy. Farrell didn't seem to be able to hit hard enough to bring Ben down any more, and Ben was content to cuff him like a playful kitten. The crowd kept up a steady stamping of feet and booing, as Ben would laugh when Farrell's glove smacked against his face or body. This went on until the end of the bout, when the reporters checked up. They credited Ben with the first two rounds, called the third even and gave the last three and the decision to Young Farrell, because, as they said, he had done all the trying in those rounds.

"'At was a crime!" says Jerry, shaking his head mournfully, as Ben and his manager started for the dressing room. "If Ben had only quit stallin' he'd of knocked Farrell for a Chinese bathhouse!"

"Your heavy boy friend left his fight in the gym!" remarks Pete.

Me and Hazel deserted 'em, as they wished to stay for the championship bout that followed and we were going home with Ben. Outside the club house, we made a taxi wait at a rear exit where the gladiators came out.

"Here's Ben now!" exclaims Hazel, interrupting something I was saying.

The taxi door was pulled open and there stood not Ben—but Young Farrell and another piano mover!

"Here's a good break!" grins Farrell evilly to his friend. "A couple of snappy cutesy all set for us. Get in, Jake!"

"Don't you dare come in here, you big

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ruffian!" I says. "This taxi-cab is engaged!"
"Well, I ain't!" says Farrell, looking at me
ravenously. "Me and you's goin' to kill a lot
of time tonight, Good Lookin'!"

The taxi driver looked worried, but did
nothing. After all, he was just a little fellow.
Hazel shrieked as Farrell put his foot inside the
cab and then I heard some familiar voices.

"What's the trouble here?" comes Ben's
pleasant baritone.

I spoke before I remembered that Farrell
had just whipped Bennie. I was excited and
really frightened!

"Ben—this man insulted me!" I panted.
"He—"

But that was ample!

Without a word, Ben grabbed Farrell's sur-
prised confederate by the back of the neck and
flung him crashing against the wall of the club
house. The merry, boyish smile Benjamin had
worn in the ring was elsewhere—his ordinarily
mild blue eyes were now just glittering slits!
Farrell turned with the vilest oath I've ever
heard in my life and Ben's arm seemed to un-
coil from his huge shoulder as if released by a
spring. His clenched fist caught Farrell some-

where on the face and Farrell dropped to the
hard pavement as if shot through the heart.
He never moved a muscle. Just one blow!

"Get goin'—I'll give you the address later!"
yells Jimmy Clinch to the petrified taxi driver
and half shoved Ben inside the cab. We'd
gone a block before anybody spoke.

"D'ye see now what you could of did to that
boloney?" busts out Jimmy, savagely shaking
Ben's arm. "If you'd of patted him like that
in the first round he'd of been on the mat till
they swept him up! But, no—you got to go in
there and clown till he makes a monkey out
of you! What am I goin' to do with you? You
can hit and you can take it, but you won't get
mad and fight!"

The silent Ben just looks bewildered. He's
thoughtfully wrapping a handkerchief around
his scraped knuckles.

"I have the answer!" I says, with a smile.
"I know how to make Ben fight!"

"How?" demands Jimmy, eagerly.

"Why—it's a simple matter," I says. "Just
before he enters the ring hereafter, I'll have his
opponent insult me!"

See you all of a sudden.

And They Lived Happily Ever After

(Continued from page 85)

courtesy demanded that he remain with
Weston when Mrs. Weston and Alice appeared
sheathed in wrappers and with their heads
bound in bathing caps.

"Aren't you going in?" Mrs. Weston asked
Mort from the veranda steps.

"I don't believe Mort cares much for the
water," Alice answered, seeing in the propin-
quity of the two men an opportunity for Mort
to cultivate Weston.

"I'll be along pretty soon," Mort replied.
Weston mumbled something to the effect that
Crane had better get his swim; as for him he'd
cheerfully be hanged if he'd get into a river
when he had a bath-tub at home. When he
went to Atlantic City that was different; there
was some tonic in sea water but a measly
little river was not to his taste. One might
have thought that White River had been
created merely to annoy him. He abused
rivers in general as he helped himself to more
of the Scotch with a generosity that caused
Mort to be glad that he had declined to en-
croach upon the limited supply in the flask.
Weston was a trifle ridiculous as he lay sprawled
in his white trousers, his feet encased in white
shoes, enjoying the rôle of martyr. After a
time he launched upon a lecture on the state
of the bond market, about which Mort knew
nothing, and then turned upon business in
general, winding up with an inquiry about the
printing business.

"You do fine work down there. I don't see
why we don't give you our business. Guess
Spencer never asked for it. I got a man who
takes care of that sort of thing. I make it a
rule never to bother about details. Now some
men are born for detail. We all appreciate
those birds but they haven't got the vision—
fellows like that see just about so far."

"Well, I guess I'm one of them," Mort re-
plied good-naturedly. "There's a lot of detail
about printing."

Weston turned his head to inspect Mort,
possibly to make sure he wasn't joking. Hav-
ing been dragged into the wilderness it was a
relief to have even one auditor and he wished
to hold on to Mort.

"Now, look here! I guess I'm a bit older
than you are and let me give you a little advice.
Don't get under the machine; it's just as easy
to ride on top. Now I don't brag about my-
self but I was a bank clerk when I was twenty-
three and got married. Well, it struck me all
of a sudden one day why should I be a bank
clerk! Nothing in it—go on being a clerk till
finally you're no good for anything but to sort
checks or run errands. And I got out! Took
a chance; went in with an established firm for

a while to learn the securities business. Then
I stepped right out for myself. Of course I had
luck, but I worked. You've got to hustle in
this world if you get anywhere. It's my idea
that just as soon as a man's dissatisfied he's in
the wrong business and the quicker he changes
the better. Let me see—you got an interest
in the Spencer Press?"

"Yes; or rather my wife has. She's the heavy
financial end of the family."

"Uum—m—" Weston assented equivocally.
"Suppose you're planted there for life. Well,
I'm always looking for good men. That's the
hell of business—getting a good organization
and keeping it up to the scratch. I could use a
couple of good men any time."

Mort felt that Weston was paying him the
compliment of appraising him, trying to decide
whether there might not be a likely candidate
for one of the vacancies on his staff.

"I suppose it takes a special talent to sell
securities," he remarked, curious as to what
further Weston might say on the subject.

The question interested Weston at once, as
affording him an opportunity to reveal his
wide knowledge of the qualities essential in a
bond salesman.

"Well, Crane, there's a funny thing about that.
I've sent men out who never had sold a thing
in their lives and they surprised me by making
good—one of them is going big right now.
Selling bonds is different from selling peanuts
or washing machines. These brass fellows and
glib talkers who haven't any finesse and don't
know how to approach the investor are not
half so good as the fellows who keep the calm
tone and make a show of being absolutely on
the dead level. Human nature's a damned
funny thing, Crane. You got to know psy-
chology to win timid people over—you got
to sympathize with their timidity and fill 'em
with confidence. And right there the smart
Alex who might go big selling patent medicine
at a county fair is no good—by George!—he's
worse than no good!"

Weston, now pleasantly inspired by the
whisky and water he continued to sip luxuri-
ously, pictured the bond game, as he called it,
as a vocation of many attractions.

The cries of the children at play in the river
had reached them from time to time, and
Freida's voice was now heard calling to her
father to hurry down.

"By George! You'll miss your swim! Don't
mind me! Run right along!" exclaimed Weston.
"I'm about ready for a nap. Glad to have this
talk with you. Drop in at the office some day!"

When Mort came out dressed for the water
Weston was sound asleep.

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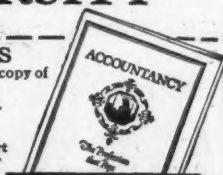
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at his garden, took Alice and Freida for drives and joined in such summer sociabilities as were offered. He found that he had less than formerly to tell Alice about the Press. He stopped carrying home proofs and designs for her inspection, knowing that she no longer shared his pride in his work but thought him stupid for not concerning himself more strictly with the money-making possibilities of the business. It was a relief to have Freida about—Freida who was always cheerful. The fact that they were not able to take their usual two weeks' vacation trip evoked Alice's frequent querulous complaints because everyone else could escape from the heat while it was impossible for them. He had explained that their expenses had been exceeding the budget and that the last payment on the house was due in January. It was irritating to find that Alice had no sympathy with his eagerness to free their home of the mortgage.

Now and then Spencer recurred to the necessity for reorganizing and expanding, getting in new capital. Spencer did not ask Mort's opinion, merely said that he was working on plans and thought he would have no trouble getting the necessary capital. Once Spencer suggested that Mort had better talk it over with Alice—perhaps from a fear that Alice would broach the matter at home in a way that would expose the fact that she already knew that the reorganization was sure to be put through and that her support had been enlisted.

One night when they were sitting on their veranda alone Mort asked Alice whether she would be in favor of the changes, telling her all he had learned about them from Spencer. "Why, of course, I'm for going ahead. The Press will die of dry rot if you don't wake up. You'd better let Howard manage it; he knows what he's about. A big thing can be made of the Press if it's handled right."

"I guess it can," Mort assented indifferently. "I don't pretend to be a business man but I've always wanted to play safe with your money. Just as soon as we get the house paid for things will go easier. If we change the business and get in more capital the holders of the new stock will have to share in the earnings—you understand that. I don't know who Howard's talking of taking in, but people who invest money want returns. They'll be in a position to be nasty if they don't get what he promised."

"That's you all over, Mort! You don't realize that the city's growing right under your nose, and it's foolish to refuse to grow with it."

"What if we go ahead and things don't run so smoothly! Competition is mighty keen in the kind of jobs Howard wants to go out after. It would be quite possible to lose a lot of money. If I do say it myself we're doing exclusive stuff. There's a steady growth—nothing spectacular—but it's sure—along the old lines"

"Oh, yes; the old lines!" she repeated contemptuously.

The sweet breath of the flowers he so enjoyed tending rose about them in the windless evening air. He loved their little plot of earth, and loved his work; experienced constantly an unhappy twinge at the thought of jeopardizing the future by changes which struck him as hazardous experiments. But in his soul he was troubled by a feeling that Alice might be right in complaining of his lack of enterprise. He wished he had a harder and more venturesome spirit—honestly wished it for her sake and Freida's. He tortured himself by contemplating a situation where they would be left penniless and he would be obliged to begin all over again.

He was unaware of the long silence that fell between them and when Alice said she had sewing to do and went into the house he did not follow, but wandered about the garden with his pipe. In other times he would have gone in to talk or read to her, but since her bitter tirade on the night of their wedding anniversary there had been a difference. It was a strange, an unaccountable thing, that he had lost his old contentment in her companionship.

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Golden Glint SHAMPOO

Something had gone out of their lives, and he missed and grieved for it and bewilderedly sought some clue to its recovery.

Alice made no outward sign that she was aware of a breach between them. She was indeed rather more cheerful than usual as she went about the house. She had definitely decided that she would no longer yield to Mort's whims, or submit to what she called his tyranny. When they were invited to drive somewhere for supper or someone seized upon a cool evening to give a card party, she merely told him without consulting his wishes that she had made the engagement. She no longer apologized for the household bills but merely put them on the writing table in his room.

She had taken a stand—that was the way she put it to herself—and would no longer submit to his nigardliness when it was his own fault that their income was so limited. By pushing him she meant to rouse him to a consciousness of his shortcomings. If he knew that bills had to be met he would find a way to pay them.

As Freida was a resourceful young person and a number of her young friends were remaining in town for the summer she was not without amusement. Young Joe Weston was frequently at the house, and several times Mrs. Weston had asked Freida to the Saturday night dances at the Country Club. Joe Junior's interest in Freida gave Alice the keenest satisfaction. She was not averse to mentioning for Mort's benefit that it was her own initiative that had brought the Westons within the Cranes' social orbit. She played upon this constantly, and made effective use of it to support the purchase of new clothes for Freida to wear to functions where she was the Westons' guest.

Freida, endowed with alert eyes and ears, was aware that something was amiss. If she had shown either parent any partiality it had been her father she had favored, and her young heart was troubled to find his old enthusiasms diminished. He went about silently, and no longer encouraged her chaff with his old spirit.

An unwonted restraint had fallen upon the house, and Freida was awed by it. She followed Mort about the garden as he worked in the twilight after dinner, talking briskly in an attempt to evoke his old cheery responses to her babble. When darkness fell she would idle about the garden walks with him as he smoked, or sit down beside him on one of the benches.

"What's the matter, papa? Don't you feel well," she would ask stealing close to him and taking his hand.

"Of course, kiddo; I'm all right. It's a hot summer and I get tired, that's all."

Sometimes Alice would call from the house a peremptory order for Freida to come in. She would get her feet wet; her father ought to know better than to let her play with the hose. And in obeying, Freida, with her splendid vitality, her healthy young mind, was mystified and grieved that something was amiss with her father and mother that was beyond her power to remedy . . .

Alice was seeing much of Elsie Avery. They visited each other constantly with the pretext of sewing together. The Averages had a touring car and a chauffeur so that it was much pleasanter for Alice to go into town with Elsie to shop than to drive herself into the marts of trade in her flivver, with all the attendant discomforts and uncertainties of finding a place to park. And if they remained downtown for lunch they had the satisfaction of knowing that their husbands were busy and their two daughters were keeping each other company.

Elsie hated being alone. Some of her neighbors on Jefferson Boulevard had not welcomed her with any degree of enthusiasm, and Alice, a scant quarter of a mile away in the less exclusive Whitcomb Place region, had plenty of time and was a convenient resource. Elsie lived at high pressure; her superabundant energy demanded an outlet, and Alice was a

stimulating auditor for her gossip and a responsive companion in anything that might be proposed. Elsie's rough heartiness fortified Alice for her new rôle of independence. Though they were approximately the same age, Elsie seemed to Alice vastly older and richer in experience. Elsie's impatient flings at conventionality and oft-reiterated assertion of her intention of getting some fun out of life found ready acceptance in Alice's mind.

Mort rarely left town, but on a day in August he announced that it was necessary for him to make a trip to Dayton for a consultation about an order in which he was particularly interested. He suggested to Alice that if she cared to go along he would drive over. The idea didn't appeal to her; she gave the excessive heat as an excuse for refusing.

Little as she was seeing of Mort, Alice experienced a sense of relief that he was to be away for a day or two. She had wondered just how it would be if their estrangement should broaden to a complete separation. There was food for thought here. A few years earlier she would have been horrified by the idea. Now it didn't seem so terrible. Mort as an encumbrance, a poor ambitionless drudge had replaced the Mort with whom she had buoyantly joined her fate. The very meekness with which he went about the house, the regularity of his routine, his very submissiveness to the things she proposed had become a source of irritation.

Freida was away, having accompanied Mrs. Weston and her children on a motor trip. Alice was wondering how she could amuse herself in Mort's absence when Elsie Avery called her on the telephone.

"What! You a widow too? Jim's gone for a few days—political business—so he claimed! And Dorothy's spending a week with Jim's mother. How are you fixed for this evening?"

"Nobody freer!"

"Then we'd better think up something. I'm not for sitting on my porch alone—I'll tell you that!"

"I was going to ask you to come over here," said Alice.

"Not exciting enough! We don't both of us have a night off very often. Let me think. Well, there's old Howard! Why not put it up to him to play with us. The least he can do is to feed us somewhere. He can always pick up another man. Why don't you ask him?"

"I hardly like to do that," Alice replied dubiously.

"Oh, thunder! Let Elsie do it. You sit right there till I fix something."

While she waited Alice fought an inclination to refuse to join in any entertainment that Elsie might propose. In spite of her hostile feeling toward Mort her conscience was uneasy at the suggestion that she take advantage of his absence to do something she wouldn't do if he were at home. When the telephone rang fifteen minutes later she hoped Elsie would report that Howard was unavailable, but on the contrary he was not only free for the evening but delighted to have an excuse for giving a party.

"We're to have dinner at his house. There'll be a complete quartette—never mind about the other man—that's a surprise. Dinner at half-past seven. I'll come by in my runabout and pick you up. You know the lay of the Redding house—drive right into the grounds and nobody the wiser. W-h-a-t! Now look here, Alice! Don't you go back on me! There's nothing wrong with this party, but we're not going to advertise it in the papers. Be a good little sport!"

Alice's wavering spirit rallied as Elsie broached the subject of what they should wear, the importance of which obscured for the moment the purely ethical aspects of the entertainment. To the broad-minded Elsie, there was nothing so heinous in going to a bachelor's house for dinner in her husband's absence from town, and Alice persuaded herself there was nothing wrong in the idea. Spencer called her on the telephone to confirm Elsie's report the invitation. He declared that he had been waiting for just such a chance to ask her and

Elsie to dinner. Everything would be all right; he was at pains to reassure her as to the perfect all-rightness of everything . . .

Alice dressed carefully and established herself on the veranda half an hour before Elsie arrived to be prepared with the excuse that she was going out if anyone dropped in for a neighborly call. She was unable to overcome a degree of nervousness, and it was with relief that she welcomed Elsie.

They went into the house to inspect each other's raiment and Elsie declared that she must have a few pulls at a cigaret.

"I almost got caught!" she exclaimed. "Some people came along who wanted me to go driving. I had a deuce of a time getting rid of them. Had to lie horribly—told 'em you and I were going to a bridge party. We may play cards, you know. Don't worry! I covered everything."

"I guess we both look young and girlish enough," remarked Elsie as she scrutinized Alice's face. "You're right as you are. With your skin you don't need to paint like a savage, but I think you'd look a trifle more piquant if you had your eyebrows plucked. They tell me"—she dilated her eyes and folded her hands in a theatrical pose—"they tell me I'm really quite oriental when I get all made up. Jim sort o' likes it. But I would to God I could control my chin better! Our friend Mrs. Weston goes right along on one chin and doesn't weigh an ounce more than she did at twenty. I hate these women who refuse to get fat!"

"Well, I'm doomed!" said Alice drawing the back of her hand along her chin.

"Oh, tush! You've got the look of the eternal girl. That's the joy of being small. Me! I'll be as big as a barn in a few years. Jim says I must stop eating gravy. Let's go. We're going to be late but they'll appreciate us all the more for having to wait for us!"

The entrance to the Redding place was at the side of the house and Elsie swept the car into the driveway at a high speed so that any curious persons who might see the machine would have difficulty in recognizing the passengers. Spencer met them at the door with rapturous welcome.

"Is my beau here?" asked Elsie in a whisper as she peered under the piano.

"Look behind you!" said Spencer. "There's the old pirate!"

Joe Weston came in through the French window that opened on the veranda, a broad grin on his face.

"Never thought you'd make it! I've lost money on you two—bet Howard ten dollars you'd never show up!" Weston walked up to Elsie and gave her cheek a pat. "No times like the old times," he said. "Now, Mrs. Crane," he took Alice's hand and clung to it as he continued, "you and I don't know each other as we should. We've got to get better acquainted. Something told me the first time we met that you were one of the Lord's anointed. By George!—Howard, there are so many dead ones in this world it's certainly a joy to meet a new live one! We're lucky devils I can tell you—got the two prettiest and smartest women in town to dine with us. I don't know how you feel but I'm proud—I'm proud to be here!"

"Let's hope the neighbors don't know how proud you are!" cried Elsie.

"Out of town on both sides!" said Spencer. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Weston; may I trouble you to let go of that lady's hand!"

"Oh, let him hold it!" said Elsie. "It's a big thing for an old ruin like Joe to have a hand to hold—at his age—and everything!"

"My age!" blustered Weston. "How dare you speak of my age! Alice, do I strike you as being venerable?"

"You're just a boy to me!" returned Alice, backing away to inspect him.

"The merest child!" Elsie added. She pushed him into line beside Howard and called upon Alice to support her assertion that they were two nice little boys who looked very

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By Edna Wallace Hopper

It is queer, but all great aids to youth and beauty have been discovered by scientific men. And most of them by Frenchmen.

Women run beauty parlors, pose as beauty experts. But every great help they employ is the creation of some man.

I've found that so in my 40-year search for the greatest beauty helps in existence. Man-made helps developed my beauty. And man-made helps have kept my youthful bloom.

Now those supreme helps are at every woman's call. The helps that made me what I am. The latest and best men know. All are combined in just four preparations, supplied by all toilet counters.

I urge every girl and woman to learn what they can do. Mail the coupon for a test of one.

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It comes in two types—cold cream and vanishing. I use it as a night cream, also daytimes as a powder base. Never is my skin without it. My velvet complexion shows what that cream can do.

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It contains no animal, no vegetable fat. The skin cannot absorb it. So it cleans to the depths, then departs. All the dirt, grease, grime and dead skin come out with it. My Facial Youth will bring you new conceptions of what a clean skin means. The cost is 75¢.

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sweet and chaste in their white trousers.

"We must be careful not to hurt their feelings," said Alice, eager to appear as thoroughly animated as Elsie by the spirit of good fellowship. "I think just a touch here—" she tipped to Spencer and gave his tie a twist, darting away with a scream as he tried to catch her.

"Is there going to be a tiny little drink or should we have brought our own?" inquired Elsie. "I'm perishing!"

Whereupon Spencer pressed a button and a colored butler appeared with a tray.

"Unless I'm deceived this is sloe gin!" said Elsie holding up her glass. "The good old days have come back!"

"You've got Joe to thank! He dug this up out of his private stock just for you."

"Sentiment, that's me!" said Joe. "Been keeping this hid for you in the hope of another party!"

The glass doors were flung open and they went into the dining-room where the women praised ecstatically the arrangement of the table. Spencer was not without his taste in such matters and he had produced the best china the house afforded. There was no questioning Weston's enjoyment of the party. He kept repeating that not in years had he found a company so much to his taste. It was evident that he and Elsie had met on many parties in the good old times to which he constantly referred, and as the high-balls served with the fried chicken opened the vistas of memory he and Elsie launched into reminiscences.

Alice's sense of the strangeness of being there passed as the atmosphere became surcharged with merriment. The others were at pains to include her in the conversation, appealing to her frequently on matters of conduct about which they pretended to wish her decision, usually as to whether Weston, in certain elaborately described situations, had acted like a gentleman. These appeals were all made in a vein of mockery which Alice tried to imitate. When Weston, with a deep sigh, said that he would never forget the first time he kissed Elsie, Elsie rose to protest that he was forgetting himself; that never in the wide world had he kissed her. Spencer supported Elsie's side of the controversy; he could swear that Joe had never kissed Elsie, evoking Elsie's familiar whoop when he added that he himself had never kissed her more than a hundred times.

The butler continued serving the meal through this rapid-fire talk, and when other subjects failed, Spencer's guests praised the food, which was by general consent the best they had ever eaten.

"Anybody would think you came only for food," complained Spencer. "Why don't you think up something nice to say about me?"

"Alice," said Elsie, "you say something nice to Howard. I can't because Joe is so jealous."

"Howard knows what I think about him, don't you, Howard?" Alice demanded.

"Frankly, I don't know that you ever told me," Spencer replied. "And perhaps now—with the others present—is not the best time for the revelation."

"Alice is crazy about you!" volunteered Elsie in a loud whisper.

"Why, Elsie! You promised never to tell!" cried Alice with simulated horror.

This vein, so developed as to include Elsie and Weston, seemed well-nigh inexhaustible. Alice found that she was able to maintain her end of the discussion quite as well as Elsie, who, beyond question, had a way of her own with men. Alice was not without a jealous twinge as she saw Spencer exchange meaningful glances with Elsie. Elsie's tongue was loosened by the liquor she had imbibed. She talked incessantly, saying foolish or audacious things, and punctuating such sentences as the others were able to utter with her gurgling laugh.

They were subdued to a quieter tone by sheer fatigue by the time coffee was served on the tiled terrace outside. The butler, reinforced by three other negroes, sang some old-time songs under the tall maples in the back-yard. For half an hour their voices, touched with the

pathos inseparable from the melodies of their race, floated across the lawn.

"That music was all right, Howard, but it makes me sad!" blurted Weston when the quaint harmonies died away. "Forgive me if I weep!"

"Joe needs a drink," Elsie suggested. "We mustn't let him weep!"

As the minstrel butler had taken his departure, she volunteered to be the waitress and Weston followed her to the pantry. He appeared presently and left a tray saying that he and Elsie were taking their drinks into the living-room; there was a lot of things he wanted to talk over with Elsie.

"What a good fellow Joe is," remarked Spencer, striking a match to find the drinks in the dimly lighted terrace and seating himself beside Alice on a wicker settee. "You're not drinking? Well, I'm not urging you. On a hot night I like to keep a glass where I can reach it. I hate getting soused and I never do—really I don't! It's awfully nice of you to come, Alice. Odd that I'd known you for so long and only now feel I'm beginning to be acquainted."

"Is that the way you feel about it?" she asked with a dreaminess imposed by the warm lulling air and the drinks.

"It's a strange thing that we change as we get on. It seems a perfectly natural thing to be seeing you now—in this way—"

His last phrase fell from his lips lingeringly, in a way that left considerable margin for speculation as to what he meant.

"Oh, this might amuse you once; you know perfectly well you don't care anything about me—"

"If you knew I did—?"

As she made no reply he took her hand. She feigned not to notice that he had taken it.

"Howard," she began musingly, "is there any way of telling whether people are happy? I mean can you tell whether they are, just by seeing them? That sounds stupid, but you know what I mean."

"I suppose we're all happy sometimes," he replied cautiously. "For example—I'm very happy right now—are you?"

"Yes; I'm happy now—when I oughtn't to be."

"Yet we have a right to be happy, haven't we?"

"Of course. But—this isn't right—this—my being here."

She tried to free her hand, but he clasped it tighter and bent nearer.

"Why bother about that! Of course it's all right. It's a pity if you can't have an evening now and then. I'd say you're entitled to it. And nobody's the wiser anyhow."

This last assertion was not well considered. She drew away, and he realized that he had made a mistake. Knowing as he did that an evening spent away from home without Mort's knowledge was a distinct departure from the established course of her life he had blundered in reminding her that she was doing secretly something that she would never have done if there had been any chance of discovery.

"I'm making some headway with our changes at the Press," he began quickly. "You know I'm just as much interested for you as I am for myself in striking out for bigger business. It's a real inspiration to me to know that you'll be benefited. I mean that, Alice. I have no intention of marrying, and a man's got to have somebody to work for. So here you are, and it's a spur to know that if I make a success of the Press, beyond anything we used to dream of, it will mean a lot to you."

"Thank you, Howard," she murmured drawing a little closer to him. "It's mighty nice to know you feel that way about it."

"No one in all the world is as dear to me as you are," he continued in a lower voice. "You ought to know that!"

"You mustn't say such things," she said waveringly, her doubts as to the propriety of her being there yielding to his tender tone, the pressure of his arm that had now stolen round her.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill"

is the most gruesome commandment handed down to mankind. A man may lie, steal or break any other law and the public will eventually forgive and forget. But let him commit murder and the cry of everybody is to give him the full penalty—*Death!* And what is the common excuse of the murderer? *INSANITY!* Sure, he's crazy. Any man must be crazy to commit murder.

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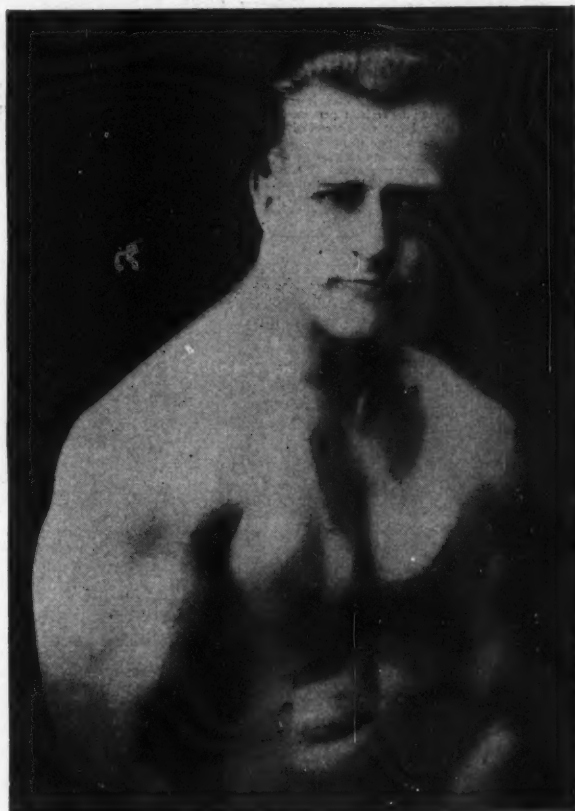
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"I must say them. I've wanted to say them for a long time."

"Do you really care just a little what becomes of me—whether I'm happy or not?"

"I care about everything," he said and kissed her. As she made no resistance he kissed her again.

"We ought to go in—Elsie will wonder what has become of us."

"All right; I guess Elsie isn't worrying about us," he said easily and found her glass. "You hardly touched your drink. We'll make a loving cup of it," he said and held it to her lips . . .

"You're just in time! Joe's reached the point of saturation!" was Elsie's greeting when they entered the living-room. Weston, seated in one chair, with his feet on another, blinked at them sleepily.

"Elsie's silly," he said. "I'm the original man who knew when he had enough."

"You are that very man," Spencer assented ironically, as he picked up the bottle from which the two had been imbibing and held it to the light. "I suppose Elsie drank most of this?"

"Knock me; don't knock my little girl friend!" said Weston. "I won't stand for it. That girl has always loved me."

"Thanks for that lie, you grand old soak," Elsie retorted.

"I'll say this for Elsie; she can carry more liquor without showing it than any woman in the world," Spencer declared. "Just look at her, Alice. Her hair's a little mussed but otherwise she's absolutely all right!"

"We've been talking business," said Elsie loftily. "Joe's given me some good tips on the market and I'm going to be a rich woman!"

"There's comedy for you! I've lost millions on the tips Joe's given me!" said Spencer.

"Howard and I have been talking business too!" said Alice. "We're both going to be rich!"

"Yes, sir; I'm going to make a rich woman of Alice," Spencer declared. "You won't be able to see us for dust when we get going."

Weston roused himself to suggest that a fresh bottle be produced to top off the evening, but Spencer flatly refused. Alice liked his manner of refusing; he was infinitely superior in every way to Weston. Elsie laid her finger on Weston's lips when he showed a disposition to resent Spencer's veto of the idea of producing more whisky.

"Not a drop more, Joey! You're a dear old boy and we're not going to let you make a little gosling of yourself. Just one little kiss and then we'll go home like good little children."

Weston good-humoredly accepted this, declaring that one of Elsie's kisses was worth all the drinks in the world. Alice was interested in Elsie's manner of managing him. Very likely Elsie was skilled in the art of handling tipsy men, an accomplishment which Alice had

never previously thought of as essential to a woman's social equipment.

Weston's mind was functioning perfectly, he said it was. If the party was over, he would go home; but there must be more parties. He would give a party that would surpass anything Indianapolis had ever known. As this failed to impress them he widened the area; it would transcend anything the state of Indiana had ever witnessed. Life would be unbearable without something pleasant to look forward to. He wasn't dead yet; he would show the world that Joe Weston was a living man. He left first, driving his car with a sure hand down the driveway to the street and giving the horn an ironic toot in contempt of their fear that he wouldn't be able to negotiate the gate.

"He's all right if he doesn't have to breathe on a policeman," said Elsie as Weston's tail light vanished through the shrubbery. "Now, Mrs. Crane, you and I will step into our boat and sail for our peaceful homes."

"You girls are peaches for coming," said Spencer as he helped them into their car. "We must give the house a good work-out while the Reddings are away."

"We sure must, Howard," Elsie replied. "I see I'm going to be used freely to chaperone you and Alice. Ideal arrangement. Make your farewell tender, children. Better kiss me too so Alice won't be embarrassed!" and she sent her car forward with a laughing good night.

"Well, it really does help a little to break loose occasionally," she declared as they sped homeward. She volunteered the information that Jim would kill her if he knew she had "stepped out" in his absence. The idea of being killed for so harmless a departure from her routine greatly amused her, and Alice performed with her. It was difficult not to laugh with Elsie. Alice was reflecting that there had not been enough laughter in her own life. She had been narrow, scornful of human folly, and a good deal of a prude; but it was possible to break over the boundaries occasionally without danger provided always that one kept on the safe side of laughter.

When they reached the Crane house Elsie insisted on going in to make sure there wasn't a burglar hidden somewhere. She even volunteered to spend the night if Alice was afraid to stay alone.

"Well," she said finally at the door. "You're a good little sport, Alice. I guess we gave those birds a good time!" she yawned and added: "God made men weak so—" she was overcome with mirth at her own wit, "—so women needn't be lonesome!"

Not to eat of the fruit of forbidden pleasure, but to sit under the tree and perhaps shake down a few apples for playthings—this seemed to Alice wholly feasible without doing violence to the moral code . . . She had enjoyed Spencer's party.

(To be continued)

Is Alice sufficiently worldly wise to play with fire and not get burned? The succeeding instalments of "And They Lived Happily Ever After" show the development of a poignant and dramatic situation in the lives of Alice and Mort Crane.

The Perfect Husband

(Continued from page 64)

pictures was an astounding exception—one of those things you simply can't explain. I tell you it was so unusual that it was an event in my life."

"Your husband's a great gardener, isn't he?"

"Not at all, my dear. He's a gardener. He doesn't garden all the time. He reads 'The Daily Telegraph' through every day, and that takes him from two to three hours."

"Well, you are a slothful pair."

"I shouldn't call Leonard slothful," said Elizabeth. "He's twelve years older than I. He worked a lot too hard until he retired from engineering. And his health isn't too good. If he's idle he's earned it; but he isn't."

"I'm sure he's earned it," said Tikky eagerly and kindly, for she had noticed a touch of genuine seriousness in Elizabeth's humorous voice.

"Tikky," Elizabeth began in a new tone, leaning forward on the chair, which was too small for her. "I am about to confide to you the secret of my life. I've never written it to you because it isn't the sort of thing that sensible people write about. My husband is jealous. My Leonard is a jealous husband, fiercely and untiringly jealous."

"Oh!"

"I have to put up with any old stick of a servant because my Leonard hates me to be

human with servants. We might have kept Jimmy at home, or near home, only Leonard really preferred him to go because Jimmy and I were always so thick together. Same with Anna. I really only went to the pictures last night in order to defy Leonard—you see I have to keep him within bounds. He's always been jealous of you—yes, though we only write to each other about once a year! He's always finding excuses to move your photograph off the bedroom mantelpiece. And I bet anything he was pretty rudish to you last night when you called. You see he can't help it."

"I wouldn't say he was rude, my child," said Tikky without conviction.

"I didn't say rude, I said rudish," Elizabeth laughed. "I had to take him firmly in hand last night. Yes, I got angry because he hadn't made you stay till I came home, or come and hiked me out of the cinema. I frightened him." Elizabeth looked grave. "We had a great scene of reconciliation after he'd apologized. But I made him get up at six-thirty this morning and go out on his bicycle and find me a boat . . . I say, of course I wouldn't talk in this style to another soul! You know that, don't you?"

"Naturally I know it, you silly fool!" Tikky retorted blandly. "But I say—"

"What?"

"Seeing as we're talking like this, isn't it rather trying for you, all this—er—jealousy?"

"Trying!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "You bet it's trying. But it's lovely, my child. I'm that man's passion. I'm his atmosphere. I'm his climate. I'm his life. I'm all his life. I'm the last thing he thinks about before he goes to sleep and the first thing he thinks about when he wakes up. He's in a perfect fever this very moment because I insisted on coming off to you alone. I dress for him. I wear jewels for him—jewels that he pays for. And it's been so for twenty-four years. And I'm in my fiftieth year. Can you beat it, my infant? Isn't it enough? What does it matter to me in what sort of a pudding-basin place I live? I've succeeded."

Tikky dangled her leg against the side of the bunk. Her face had the look of one to whom revelation has been vouchsafed and the dark meaning of existence rendered clear.

Suddenly Mrs. Proctor slipped off the bunk and seemed to be listening—or at any rate to be fixing one or another of her senses on some mysterious phenomenon. She swayed slightly. The teaspoon in the cup and saucer which she had placed on the little tip-up by the bunk shifted its position with a slight metallic click. She dashed out of the cabin. The second steward was rubbing the walls of the corridor. "What are we doing?" she demanded anxiously.

"We're at sea, madam."

"But I never heard the anchor-chains."

"No, madam. While you were ashore last night, as there was a mooring-buoy not being used, the captain thought it would save time this morning if we got up the anchors then and just moored to the buoy. So we only had to cast off this morning."

Mrs. Proctor did not entirely understand these technical statements, but she thought she did and was more than ever convinced that seamanship was an odd business.

"But the engine isn't going!"

"No, madam."

"And I didn't hear the sails go up."

"No, madam. You see there's a very nice fair breeze, and so the captain only hoisted the foresail, so as not to disturb anybody below."

"But—"

Mrs. Proctor did not proceed further with the steward. She perceived in a flash how an awful thing had come about. Neither the captain nor the crew had seen Elizabeth arrive on board. They were all at breakfast in the forecabin. Elizabeth had embarked silently, used no gangway, and her own boat had vanished for the time being. Breakfast finished, the captain had given his orders, beautifully ignorant of the presence of a stranger on board, and the yacht Aphra had stolen

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away and stolen Mrs. Draver from her spouse. Mrs. Draver appeared with a puzzled face at the door of the cabin.

"My dear. Something simply frightful has happened. The captain didn't know you were on board and we're at sea."

"Well, the captain will have to put back then," said Mrs. Draver calmly.

"Put back?" Mrs. Proctor repeated the phrase. A one hundred and twenty-five ton yacht did not put back. You didn't ask a train to put back because somebody had boarded it by mistake, and you could not ask the yacht Aphra to put back. If you did Jackie would think that the end of civilization had come.

Mrs. Proctor ran into her own cabin. Arthur was still sleeping heavily.

"Arthur! Arthur!" No response. Men were astounding.

She then knocked at the door of the owner's cabin. Equally no response. These males had slept bristly through wondrous incidents and could not be roused. Mrs. Proctor flew up on deck, followed by Mrs. Draver. Yes, the fine ketch Aphra was at sea right enough. The staysail was well filled. The captain, unaware of calamity, was at the wheel. Various members of the crew were quietly cleaning brass. The kitchen chimney was blowing off pleasant smoke. The ship pitched very, very gently in the smooth, glittering sea. The ship had something inexorable about her movement. Cry "Stop"? You could not cry "Stop." Mrs. Proctor, non-plussed, looked behind. The little pudding-basin of Polpooe was getting smaller every moment. It was fading. It was like a historical event, receding irrevocably into the past, and never to be recalled. To see Polpooe from the moving ship was like reading about Polpooe.

Then was heard the distant sound of a siren, several times sharply repeated. The captain gazed aft. All the sailors on deck ceased work and gazed aft.

"What's the fellow making a noise about?" asked the captain.

"Hadn't you better stop, skipper?" Mrs. Proctor weakly suggested, utterly unlike herself. "Stop?" We can't stop. She's got a running tide under her. Besides—"

At this point the captain caught sight of an unknown woman, Mrs. Draver, and was transfixed with astonishment. The look on his face was so comical that Mrs. Proctor laughed the laugh of incipient hysteria. Both stewards came on deck. The cook's white-capped head appeared at the forecabin hatch.

"That's that old coal barge a-coming," said the captain. "If she wants us she'll soon overhaul us. She's got a motor in her enough to shake her to bits. I seed her last year."

The pursuing vessel showed a foaming prow, and was visibly growing larger and larger.

"Leonard is in that barge!" exclaimed Mrs. Draver solemnly.

"Lower yer staysail!" shouted the captain.

"Lower yer staysail," repeated two deckhands, according to ritual, and the staysail came down with a rattle.

"Hoist yer staysail," the captain cried a few minutes later. "He looks as if he was coming alongside, and I must have steering way on her."

"Hoist yer staysail," repeated the deckhands.

The staysail rose again. The coal-barge bore down with the ruthlessness and the inevitability of pursuing justice. Soon could be heard the murmur of the divided white water at her prow.

"Leonard's always watching in the garden with his glasses," said Mrs. Draver, clasping Mrs. Proctor's hand. "He saw me come on board and the boat go away, and then he saw the yacht move off and he got excited. Hence the coal-barge. He'd have chartered a steamer if he couldn't have got anything less."

Cosmopolitan for January, 1925

"But surely—" Mrs. Proctor began. "Yes, of course, infant," Mrs. Draver cut her short. "But you see Leonard doesn't think. He feels."

The coal-barge, slackening speed, drew alongside. There was a shock and a great pother. The captain of the yacht Aphra bawled something in the confusion to the grimy steerer of the coal-barge, and the steerer of the coal-barge bawled back to the captain of the yacht Aphra.

"Hi! Look out!" the captain almost screamed.

But Mrs. Draver had leaped from the yacht's rail into the vile depths of the barge; and a hatless old man had caught her by the waist and was holding her, and also kissing her. "Well," muttered the captain. "That was a fine set out, that was!"

The coal-barge sheered off, and in half a minute was making for Polpooe. Mrs. Proctor felt lonely, for Mrs. Draver seemed to have quite forgotten her.

"Alb," said the captain gloomily to the mate. "Have a look there—see how much he's done to our paint. And swab down again here. He's left half his coal dust behind him."

Lastly, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, Mrs. Draver turned and waved from the barge. And Mrs. Proctor waved in reply. She was smiling, and she was crying too—not from grief at parting with her beloved friend, but from another emotion. Might it be envy, or something nobler.

It rained softly in the afternoon. Arthur Proctor took the opportunity to have more repose in his cabin. Mrs. Proctor sat in the saloon with Jackie, listening to the gentle patter of the rain on the deck above. The two men had not heard the whole truth about Elizabeth's adventure of the morning; they had heard only part of it—the mere physical events of it. Tikky had not even begun to relate the rest, because she felt the hopelessness of trying to convey its significance to those comfortable, lazy, teasing, sardonic males. They laughed good-naturedly and quizzically at what they did hear. How could they possibly understand—the one a nice, heavy husband, sunk in ease and satisfaction, the other the lowest of created beings, a bachelor profoundly decent and indifferent to women?

Jackie and Tikky were discussing house-keeping, upon which Jackie justifiably regarded herself as an authority. They sat close together; she was holding his hand—in a friendly, affectionate way, for she liked Jackie while despising him. Arthur, having awakened, and feeling the need of tea for his refreshment, strolled into the saloon.

"Hello!" he murmured. "Here you are!" Tikky did not move—even her hand. Presently she went into their cabin. Arthur followed her and carefully shut the door. She looked at him and waited.

"I say, Tikky," said he. "I think I shall have to speak to Jackie."

"Oh, what about?" cried Tikky, as it were hopelessly.

"His confounded Ceylon tea. He really ought to give us China."

She stamped her foot impatiently, quite recovering her regular form of a very capricious, unpredictable young woman.

"Puh!" she exploded. "Is that all?"

A little later she said: "Arthur, were you ever jealous?"

"About you?"

"Yes."

"Certainly not. Why should I be?" he asked with perfect tranquillity. "Why do you ask?"

"I won't tell you—you wouldn't even know what I meant."

"Oh, all right!"

"It isn't all right," Tikky asserted, contradictory. And she thought of Elizabeth eternally watched and longed for, and she sighed.

Have you ever come face to face with death and lived to tell the tale? Bessie Beatty has—several times—and she tells how it feels in an article for a coming COSMOPOLITAN.

The Pleasure Buyers

(Continued from page 93)

while they rode in silence along the white road that borders the ocean. The tangled jungle, broken occasionally by smooth lawns, was on their right, and on their left the surf beat unceasingly upon the white sands. Palms, palmettos, banyans, the sea grape bushes, a million morning glories blinking at the sun, the soft yet invigorating breeze from the Gulf Stream—slowly the slight tension aroused by his presence relaxed; the girl sighed faintly.

"Fast enough?" he asked. They were going forty miles an hour.

She nodded smilingly. He thought he had never seen so pretty a girl. The green figured dress she wore; the toque that, despite her mass of black hair, fitted so snugly; the white slippers with their narrow straps; there was a quaint old-fashioned touch about her that appealed to him.

"So you're not frequently on time," he said.

"Rarely." She was candid. "Do you dislike unpunctual people?"

"I adore them. All we have in the world is time. Oh, I know that the humorless folk who think that life is a drab occasion for bustle and worry would resent my philosophy. Nevertheless, I like it for my own use. I hate people who are niggardly with time, who think that the incident of the moment is so important that delay is tragedy. But there is always another train to be taken; always food to be eaten, and what if the food be cold? Appetite is engendered by postponement, and cold food, with appetite, is better than hot with no zest for the meal."

"Is this philosophy?" she mocked.

"If it is, it's even more ancient than that of the time-worshippers," he laughed.

"And you dislike punctual women?"

"Punctuality is not necessarily a vice," he replied. "But have you ever noticed, Miss Ripley, that people who pride themselves on never being late, are deadly bores? I'll prove it to you. The live person, the interesting person, is too busy living to be chained to the hands of a clock. He starts to keep an engagement; some triviality catches his eyes; he finds laughter where your punctual person would find irritation; he lingers to laugh. He arrives late, but he has an entertaining tale to tell of his delay. Oh, the matter's simply not debatable."

"I shall keep you waiting next time," she said demurely.

"Fair enough; but you must promise to be amusing when you do arrive."

"I have no gift that way," she said.

The car swerved as he took his eyes off the road and looked at her.

"You have dimples; and the corners of your mouth turn up. Nevertheless, your eyes tell me that you do not laugh for the mere sake of laughter. I am convinced that you do not smile on awaking in the morning."

"I do not. I am positively vicious until I've had coffee," she admitted.

"So am I. Wherein we show our common-sense, our abiding sanity. Only congenital idiots laugh when hungry."

She smiled faintly and made no reply. The day was too wonderful, the sun too bright, the sky too blue, the ocean too divinely discontented as it plunged upon the beach, for much talk. He humored her mood. For a dozen miles they sped along the road, before he spoke again.

Then he slowed the car down. "Mind if we talk again?" he asked.

"Why not?" she retorted.

He steered the machine slightly off the road, until its wheels rested on the grass that sloped down to the beach.

"Miss Ripley," he said abruptly, "I did not kill Cassenas."



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Her eyes were wondering. "But you've already assured me that. And would I be here with you if I thought you a murderer?"

"I suppose not," he said dryly. "But what I wanted to say is this: my enmity toward Cassenas is bound to come out—in the papers, I mean. I will be the target of all sorts of scandal. It may even be that this evangelist Workman, will work up a case against me. It's quite possible that I may have to stand trial. I am sure that he is far from being convinced of my innocence."

"Yes? But I know all these things," she told him.

"I know. But have you thought of them?" "Thought of them? I don't understand you."

"Oh, I'm a clumsy sort of person. What I mean is—well, after this whole affair is ended, and I've come clear, may I—will you—"

"Are you making love to me?" she asked. He stared at her. "In a sort of a half-baked, juvenile, utterly absurd fashion, I am," he replied.

"This is the third time we have spoken to each other," she reminded him.

"The fourth," he corrected. "At Bradley's, at the Everglades, again at Bradley's today, and again here."

"Oh, if you count today twice. Aren't you a bit literal? One might be fairly justified in assuming you, who keep so accurate track of occasions, to be punctual also."

"It's a curious fact about me," he said slowly. "I never permit jesting when I am making love."

"I see," she said soberly. "That remark leads one to the conclusion that you have made love before."

"My reputation is international," he assured her.

"And women never object?"

"Never," he declared emphatically.

"One hates to be conspicuous," she said. "If I were the one lone girl who objected—but then, I never object."

"So? I gather that other men have made love to you."

"My fame is world-wide," she said gravely. He laughed gaily. "The irresistible force encounters the immovable object, and—"

"Oh, I might be moved," she admitted. Then she held up a hand. "We're silly; dreadfully silly. And—let's not be serious. Let's—let's forget that we've talked nonsense; let's remember— Remember? Why, you've talked about the scandal that will assail you. But I—I'm a woman, and I'm soiled!"

"Which is a very melodramatic manner of speech, and so quite unworthy of you. This is 1924, my dear young child, not 1824."

"Then, suppose," she said gently, "that we wait until 1925 before we become too serious, and—I thought we were to dance at Cocoanut Grove."

"We are," he assured her. He backed the car around and they rode north toward Palm Beach. They exchanged no further conversation until he parked his machine outside the Grove. Then he whispered a question to her. "At least," he said, "my entry is not refused?"

"On the contrary," she said, "the lists are open to all, but, of them all—let me conceitedly assume that there will be many—my best wishes are yours."

They entered the Grove, Terry secured a table close to the dancing-space, and the music struck up. She had danced with him last night, unaware of his identity, and had found him an ideal partner. Today, with semi-promises that passed beyond the flirtation stage, given between them, she found the dance divine. Yet, even as she gave herself to his embrace, she remembered how recently she had thought herself in love with Cassenas, how she had slipped into his arms and danced with him.

In the case of Cassenas she had made a mistake, and had later found it out. But how could she know that she was not making a mistake now, and that she would not later discover her error? The thought took the joy

from the one-step; she felt her steps lagging; pleading fatigue, she bade him lead her back to their table.

There, disinclined for speech, she sipped at tea while she watched the crowd.

It seemed that there was no end to the variety of crowds that Palm Beach assembled. Here, dancing to the music of a colored orchestra, were people like, yet curiously unlike, the people who had danced last night at the Everglades. Perhaps the likeness lay in the fact that many people who had been at the Everglades last night were here this afternoon. The unlikeness lay in the fact that into this place crept another class, the frank sight-seers of the beach. This was a public dancing place, and the world of fashion rubbed elbows with the world which was not fashionable. Chorus girl and bishop's daughter; demi-mondaine and pedigreed Knickerbocker; hard-faced men of millions and rat-faced men of wits.

Suddenly she knew what the place was like: it was Times Square transplanted to the semi-tropics. How had Times Square got here? Especially some of the fairer members? But that was a question unwisely put and equally unwisely answered. Suffice it that they were here, and that they made the spectacle gay, colorful, and oddly exotic. For one thinks of the semi-tropics as a place of languor, and here was the same hectic excitement that one finds on Broadway.

But if there be pleasure buyers, there must needs be pleasure sellers, and these, not solely women, were here this afternoon.

But the sight which, on other occasions, had thrilled her, left her cold today. She wanted to be alone, to think, to ponder over the seriousness of the situation with which she was confronted. Did she love Terry? Did he really love her? Or were they both enmeshed in temporary fancy?

He acceded to her plea; they walked to the car and he drove her to Mrs. Wiswell's house.

"For the nicest afternoon of my life, I thank you," he said as they parted.

She smiled at him, said good-by, and walked into the patio. Doctor Workman was sitting there. He arose at her entrance.

"You've been riding with Terry?" he asked. She blushed faintly. "I have. And, Doctor Workman, he did not kill Cassenas."

"You have great faith, Miss Ripley, and faith, St. Paul tells us, is the substance of things hoped for. Well, I hope that you are right."

"Do you think I am?" she asked.

"My dear young girl, in all the years I spent as a detective, I have never come across so baffling a case as this, one with so many angles. I hope that Terry is innocent. But, as an older man, I should advise you—"

"Thank you; I'm not a child," she rebuked him. "In such a matter as this I need no advice. But I don't mean to be rude. Did you want to see me about something?"

"I do," he answered. "You told me, when we first talked, about the visits that Cassenas paid to the Glendale cemetery. At least, it was rumored in Glendale, that he did."

"Yes."

"It has transpired, Miss Ripley, that Cassenas had a wife, as I told you this afternoon. She was buried in Glendale. That would account for his trips to the cemetery. Now, I want you to look at something. But before you look, I want to ask you if, when you made those alterations on the Cassenas farmhouse, you got a building permit."

"I did," she replied.

"Have you one of them here? Any official document of the town of Glendale?"

She shook her head. Then she corrected her denial. "When I went abroad I had to get a birth certificate to obtain a passport; I have that here, in my trunk, with my passport. Would you like to see it?"

"I would," he told her.

She went to her room, got the passport and birth certificate, and returned. Workman almost snatched the documents from her. From his waistcoat pocket he produced the



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slip of paper which he had retrieved from the Cassenas fireplace when Kildare was absent from the room. He compared the scrap with the birth certificate. Placing the two side by side he asked Helen to examine them.

"The letters 'l' and 'e' on your bit of paper are the same as the ending of the word Glendale on my birth certificate," she announced. "And the paper is exactly the same. What is it all about, Doctor Workman?"

"That I cannot tell you at present," he replied. "But I thank you. Perhaps in a day or so—"

And then, hastily, he was gone. Outside, Alonzo Heddy was waiting for him with a wheel-chair.

"Take me to the telegraph office," ordered Workman.

He rode with his head bent forward, his chin resting on his chest, as he studied this latest development. Kildare had burned a piece of paper which was an official document, quite probably, of the town of Glendale, New York. Why? What was it? A burial permit? It might be so. Kildare did not wish it to be known that his master was married. But why did Kildare feel this way?

Late, long after it should have come to him, he thought, he remembered the picture of Kildare's dead daughter. Could Kildare's daughter have been the wife of Cassenas? That would account for Kildare's destroying the burial permit—if such the paper was—because it would show a possible animosity on Kildare's part, toward his master.

Oh, if only the justice of the peace who had married Cassenas and Norah Murphy were here!

Again he rang Lieutenant Daly, and again the wires were cleared for him.

"Got the dope you wanted, Tad," said Daly. "The three actors were named Jones, LeClair and Baroney. Nobody of importance, and no records. But the women that the Hannan Agency turned over to Terry was named Elaine Duweese, and the Hannan people tell me that she had some sort of an affair with Cassenas ten years ago. They don't know how serious it was, and I haven't been able to get any dope on it. Just theatrical gossip that she was his girl and there was a row when they split up."

Workman was stunned. Just as evidence pointed directly at someone, it shifted and pointed elsewhere.

"That J. P. who married Cassenas," he said. "I've an idea that the bride's father is down here in Palm Beach. Could you get him to come down?"

"Kid, for the church I'll do anything," said Daly. "He'll be on the afternoon train. I've some friends on the Paterson Force that'll persuade him if I can't."

"Good. Find out more of the affair between Cassenas and Elaine Duweese, will you?"

"You bet, kid," said Daly. "Any time I can stand in with one of the guardians of the gate to Heaven, I'll be—"

But Workman, though he chuckled, rang him off.

CHAPTER XXIV

MRS. WISWELL arrived shortly after Workman had departed. She listened intently to Helen's recital of what Workman had told her.

"Imagine Gene Cassenas having been married years ago and keeping it dark," she exclaimed as the girl finished. "Murder mysteries are like houses we made of wooden blocks when we were children. Pull out one block and the whole edifice tumbles down. Pull one fact out of the hundreds surrounding a murder, and other things come tumbling after. Poor, foolish Gene."

"Not wicked Gene?" asked Helen. "What is wickedness?" countered her hostess. "Isn't an evil act just a mistake? And isn't a mistake a bit of foolishness?"

"But people who deliberately plan to do wrong—"

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"We rode—and danced," said Helen.
"And flirted?" questioned Mrs. Wiswell, mischievously.

"I always try to remember that I am a woman," said Helen demurely.

Her hostess laughed delightedly. "You know, my dear child, there have been moments when I suspected that you were a trifle too—what shall I say?—triste. I feared that all you had undergone might—well, depress you. I see that you have rallied."

"Is it brutal of me?" asked the girl quickly.
"Nonsense," exclaimed Mrs. Wiswell. "Get that out of your head for good and all. Gene Cassenas got what was coming to him."

"Because he was foolish?" asked Helen.
"I stick to what I said. Wickedness is foolishness, but it must be paid for just the same. But tell me about Terry."

"Tell you what?" asked Helen.
"He dances well? Does he make love equally well?"

"I refuse to incriminate myself."
"Oh, to be able to incriminate myself! To have a chance to hug a sly secret to my bosom. Alas—but you are a young thing, much too young to listen to the sinfully romantic yearnings of middle age."

"I don't believe a word you say," cried Helen. "Any one can tell, just from the way you talk, that you are devoted to your husband."

"My word! The impertinence of the baggage. Accusing me of mid-Victorianism. A wild, untamed creature like myself, sighing for thrills, accused of a bourgeois domesticity. Dang it, my dear, you're right. There's something about Welly Wiswell's bald head that makes my heart go pit-a-pat, and why waste time denying it? But don't breathe this girlish confession, please. Child, do not betray me; do not rob me of my chance for romance."

"I shall tell your husband," said Helen severely.

"The young are ever brutal," sighed Mrs. Wiswell. "Ah, well, ah, Welly Wiswell! My dear, if you feel you must tell Welly, tell him lots. Let's make the old thing truly jealous while we're at it. And perhaps tonight may furnish you with some real facts about my defection from marital duty. It looks like a great big evening, child."

"Why, what is it?" asked Helen.

"I've been to the Langford Whites for tea. They took me down upon the beach. There, being turned over and over by a Filipino boy, was a pig. A long wooden pole supports said pig, and beneath him burns a fire. I must not eat pork. And yet—roast pig! My dear, go and array yourself in a sport-suit, one that gravy can't hurt, for we lie ourselves to the beach at Casa Blanca, where the pig awaits us."

"A barbecue?" cried Helen.

"Exactly. And the Whites are going to have real beer, imported by one of Nature's noblemen, who runs a motor-boat between Miami and Nassau. Also, Langford, the enticing rascal, took me into their kitchen and showed me a huge chocolate cake."

"I don't think you ought to go," said Helen.

"I know I ought not, which is exactly why I am going into my chamber this very minute and step blithely into a flannel suit that's loose and modish in the waistband. Helen, you have heard of people expanding under good treatment. Well, you may watch me

expand tonight. Hurry. The barbecue begins at six-thirty."

Laughing, Helen made her way to her room; she changed the pretty green dress, of much too fragile material to wear to a barbecue, for a serge skirt and jacket of blue, with a rolling collar; open in front, the jacket revealed a white flannel vest, and Mrs. Wiswell approved flatteringly of her appearance.

Helen's knowledge of barbecues was confined to newspaper reading of accounts of big political gatherings, where candidates for office patted themselves fervently upon the back. But this barbecue was more like a picnic; indeed that's exactly what it was, with a roast pig as the *pièce de résistance*, instead of clams or lobster baking in a pit.

But it was a picnic de luxe. Paper lanterns were strung in the Whites' courtyard, and favors of paper hats were distributed. By the time the sun had set, the gay head-dresses beneath the flickering lights lent a romantic aspect to the scene.

The party began with cocktails. The host, a genial gentleman of middle age, made an impromptu speech.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "to do you honor I have had my agents ransack the earth for the edification of your palates. From Bimini my men have brought Scotch. From Canada, from the British Islands, from sunny Jamaica, from the vine-clad hills of France, stout-hearted men have traveled to dear old Bimini. May I, before going further, offer a toast to the dear old lands across the sea? God bless the British Empire and may she never have Prohibition, and damn the scoundrels who want to annex Nassau, the hope of the thirsty."

Cheers broke up his speech at this point, and the cocktails began to circulate. Excited groups gathered and cursed Prohibition. This was all new to Helen; she did not know that almost the sole topic of conversation in Palm Beach—after scandal, of course—is Prohibition. Where to get it, how to get it, how much to pay for it, and how good it tastes—Palm Beach can discuss this fascinating subject from morning until morning—and does.

"Why, the garage men keep it." "Don't be foolish; eighty dollars a case is ridiculous. Thirty-five is a fair price for the best Scotch." "Champagne? My dear, we rode all the way from Miami with five cases in the tonneau, and—"

It bored Helen after a moment. After all, these people were protected in their wealth by the laws. They flouted the Prohibition law; why wasn't it as logical for other criminals to defend their violations of law by the statement that the law which they infringed had been passed by a parcel of fanatics?

But she was not critical for long. A young man whispered to her that a negro orchestra was tuning up down on the beach, and she went with him.

Beneath a thatched tentlike structure, the Filipino chef turned the spit; pleasant aromas greeted the nostrils. Long tables were set up, and were piled high with salads, sandwiches, cases of drinkables. The firm sand was not the best dancing-floor in the world; neither was it the worst. Helen danced.

Her first partner was superseded by others; people danced munching at sandwiches, calling gaily to one another. It was, she thought, the most human spectacle she had witnessed at Palm Beach. These folk were genuinely enjoying themselves. All of them, without exception, immensely rich, they were happy without their diamond necklaces, their ropes of pearls, the servants standing behind their chairs. . . . They ate with their fingers, swore merrily when they spotted their clothing, drank out of bottles. . . . Take the village grocers and their wives, dress them fashionably, put them in gorgeous surroundings, and who shall say that these are not aristocrats? Take the aristocrats, clothe them coarsely, put them in humble surroundings, and who shall say that these are not the bourgeoisie?



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Helen, wondering, asked herself these questions, and found them unanswerable. The difference between people consisted solely in the amount of money they possessed. That is, the social difference. The things of character, of the soul, were neither affected by wealth nor its lack. Indeed, she wondered if extraneous things had anything to do with character. Would Cassenas, for instance, have been less himself without his money? Would greater wealth have made him more himself? So, beneath the gentle moon, in the party but not wholly of it, she wondered.

The roast pig was a great success. The champagne, following the humbler food, produced a daring exhilaration. A couple began following the receding waves; the woman's slipper became wet. It was a game, it transpired, with penalties and forfeits. The one whose feet got wet must kiss the other, or else pay forfeit. The woman refused the kiss. Then she must, her companion declared, wade into the surf. She came out with her white dress clinging to her, rendering visible, in the moonlight, every curve in a lovely figure.

Others took up the promising sport. Mrs. White dashed into the waves; emerging, she deliberately began discarding her soaked garments. Cries of mock protest arose, to turn into gales of laughter when, at daring length, it became evident that Mrs. White wore trunks and a jersey.

"I thought," said Mrs. Wiswell to Helen, "that Aphrodite *sans* a nightie, was being reborn. But no! Sturdy American common sense, the native modesty of the Yankee, triumphs. All the thrills of nakedness, but—garments. God bless hypocrisy, it saves our well-known faces."

A youth, mildly exhilarated by champagne, urged Helen to join him in what he declared to be the king of outdoor sports. She refused, and, undaunted, he sought another partner. A moment later he could be heard reproaching a more complaisant lady because she, warned in advance, wore a complete bathing-suit beneath her sport-suit.

"There's no more kick in you," he declared bitterly, "than in a Boston woman dressed for the evening."

"Listen, angel," said the woman, "I'll give you a free ticket to Macy's, and when you get back to dear old New York, you can spend a whole week looking at lingerie."

"Take 'em off!"

"Put 'em on!"

The cries were becoming maudlin; over near the pit where the pig had been roasted old Colonel Gleason—a famous old beau, Mrs. Wiswell whispered to the girl—was conducting funeral obsequies for the defunct pig.

"But," he moaned, "he's buried in so many places—"

"I can, too, kiss longer than any girl in the world," declared a young married woman. "Only, I won't kiss anyone but my husband."

"That isn't kissing; it's as exciting as combing your hair," said another.

"More and longer kisses, that's my motto," said a middle-aged man.

"Fewer but better," amended another.

"Did you ever kiss a girl under water?" demanded Colonel Gleason. "You seize her by the shoulders, wait for the wave to break—"

"It is time, Helen," said Mrs. Wiswell, "that we went home. Come."

Smiling, she thanked her hostess. Helen followed suit, and they left.

"Getting a trifle rough, wasn't it?" said Mrs. Wiswell.

"It all seemed in fun," said Helen.

"It was—and will remain so," declared Mrs. Wiswell. "Only, I'm thirty-eight and—I'm bored after a while."

They entered the wheel-chair and proceeded toward home. There they found Workman and Quintard awaiting them.

"Neither of us are up on ladies' wear, Mrs. Wiswell," said the evangelist. "But we thought that you might be able to help us. Quintard rummaged all around Terry's place today, and found—this."

He held up a lace-trimmed handkerchief. "It looks expensive to me," he said.

"It certainly does," Mrs. Wiswell agreed. "But what does it mean?"

"A woman," explained Workman, "was seen coming along the Lake Trail, from the scene of the murder; she entered Terry's grounds. This handkerchief may have been dropped by her."

"You see," interpolated Quintard, "it's not been rained on. It rained the night before Cassenas was killed, but not since then. So this handkerchief was dropped since the murder."

"But any one of a hundred women might have dropped it," objected Mrs. Wiswell.

"Still," countered Workman, "if we find the owner, and she can't explain why she was in the neighborhood—we've questioned the woman working for Terry; at least, Quintard did. She denies ownership."

"Well, you don't imagine it's Helen's—or mine, do you?" laughed Mrs. Wiswell.

"We thought you might be able to tell us what sort of shop it came from," said Workman.

Mrs. Wiswell shrugged. "That's a large order; it's imported; French or Belgian, I'd say. But who owned it—that's more than I could tell. Any one of a hundred shops in New York, of a dozen down here, carry handkerchiefs as expensive as that. Sorry, Tad, but I can't help."

"Let me look at it," said Helen.

Workman handed it to her; she stared at it. "Of course, I may be mistaken, but—I priced some handkerchiefs like this on the Lake Trail, the other day. Josephine-Eloise—that's the shop. They wanted twenty dollars apiece, and that was too much. They only had three of them—"

"That's enough," cried Workman. He turned to Quintard. "It's late, but we'll find out where the owners live—"

"There are only two of them; two French girls; and they live in back of their shop," said Helen.

"Come on," said Workman to Quintard.

CHAPTER XXV

"BUT, M'sieu," protested Mlle. Eloise, "this is not a time to examine the contents—"

She was sleepy, and indignant at being aroused from slumber. But the French are more amenable to lawful authority than Americans. A Yankee girl might have slammed the door in the face of the two late inquirers, but a word of explanation from Quintard caused Mlle. Eloise to forego her indignation.

Drawing her negligé closer around her, she admitted her visitors to the apartment which she shared with Mlle. Josephine. The two girls examined the handkerchief. But yes, assuredly it was of their stock. They had only three of this particular design, and only one had been sold. A week ago, to a Mrs. James Penstell, stopping at the Lanthia. Was it permitted to inquire why—

But Quintard and Workman, thanking them, failed to answer the question, and departed, leaving two voluble French maidens to lie awake half the night, wondering what the handkerchief had to do with the Cassenas mystery, for, of course, mention of Quintard's and Workman's names had told them with what the inquiry was concerned.

To the Lanthia the two men made their way. The corridors were thronged; in the Floral Room an orchestra was going full blast; the porches were crowded with couples beneath the discreetly shaded lights. But even Workman, to whom such a sight was a novelty, ignored it. They went to the desk. Mrs. James Penstell, eh? The clerk examined a book. The Penstells had checked out five days ago; they had left the name of the Renault Hotel, at Miami Beach, as their forwarding address.

"If she left before Cassenas was killed, then she couldn't have been on the Lake Trail—" began Quintard, when they were outside.



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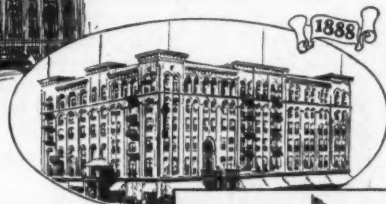
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"But she might have given the handkerchief to another person, mightn't she?" interrupted Workman.

"Of course." Quintard colored at his own obtuseness. "Then let's telephone—"

Workman shook his head. "Before we could be definite, Mrs. Penstell would have to see the handkerchief. A description over the telephone wouldn't be enough. I'm going to Miami. But first, of course, I'll telephone so that they'll be expecting me. I don't care to cool my heels around a hotel lobby until breakfast time."

They turned back into the hotel, and put through a call to Miami Beach. The clerk of the Renault informed Workman that the Penstells were registered there, but had left, that afternoon, on a fishing cruise along the Keys. They were not expected back for several days.

"That's that," said Quintard.

But Workman shook his head. "I'm going to Miami, get a boat there—"

"How'll you find them?" demanded Quintard.

"I'll get a skipper who knows the waters . . . Man, we can't delay; we don't know when the Penstells will return. They may find the fishing so enjoyable— I'm going."

When the Reverend Tad moved, he moved as he had in the old days upon the wrestling-mat, directly at the object before him. Leaving Quintard to mark time, he procured a touring car from a garage and set forth, through the night, to Miami.

Through the balmy night, over a straight white road, unimpeded by traffic, the chauffeur made excellent time. They arrived at Miami Beach at three in the morning. Exhausted, Workman engaged a room at the Renault, left a call for six o'clock, and snatched a few hours' slumber. At seven he had breakfasted; ten minutes later he had learned the name of the cruising motor-boat which the Penstells had chartered, and fifteen minutes after that had crossed the magnificent causeway that connects Miami Beach with the mainland.

He had never been in Europe, yet he wondered if Venice could be more beautiful than Biscayne Bay, with its artificial islands connected with white bridges to the causeway, the romantic villas, hidden behind palms, the gay craft that dotted the waters.

But he was in no mood to dwell upon the beauties of nature improved by the art of man. The clerk at the Renault had given him the names of half a dozen men who knew the fishing grounds and had fast motor-boats. The second man he approached was disengaged. Yes, he knew the Merrillee, the craft the Penstells had chartered. He knew the skipper of the boat, too, and had talked with him yesterday morning. Captain Reardon of the Merrillee, had told him that the Penstells had planned to anchor the first night near Cocolobos Island; Mr. Penstell was interested in the romance of the old Spanish Main, and wanted to see the places where the notorious old pirates had lain perdu in wait for unsuspecting merchantmen, for Spanish galleons laden with plate and pieces of eight.

Workman made an arrangement with Captain Simmons, his informant. He was rowed out to a sturdy-looking craft, an idling crew of three was ordered into action, and the Tarpon got under way.

At Cocolobos, forty miles away, the steward of the fishing club situated there, informed them that the Penstells had loafed in the neighborhood all morning and could not be far away. Yet it was six that evening, after circling for miles, and making inquiries of every craft they sighted, that Captain Simmons finally desisted, a few miles away, the boat for which they searched.

Workman was welcomed on board by Penstell. Disclosure of his identity created great excitement, for Miami had been as much interested in Cassenas's murder, almost, as Palm Beach. Workman produced his handkerchief, and Mrs. Penstell, a stout, amiable, middle-aged blonde, promptly identified it as

having been purchased by her from the shop of Josephine-Eloise.

"But I gave it away that very day," she added.

"To whom?" asked Workman.

"To Gladys Gary, daughter of General Gary," replied Mrs. Penstell. "But what on earth has this handkerchief to do with the murder of Cassenas? And the papers said that you were engaged in solving—"

"This handkerchief was found on the Lake Trail—or, rather, in the grounds of a house near there, and—"

"But you don't think that Gladys—why, my dear man, I've known her since she was a child," exclaimed Mrs. Penstell. "It's absurd—"

"She was engaged to Cassenas, and finding out—" her husband began.

She cut him short. "Don't be absurd. As if that mild little thing could do such a thing. Why, Doctor Workman, you don't believe—"

"I believe nothing until it has been proved," declared Workman.

He refused to discuss the matter further. Exacting a promise from the Penstells that they would not leave Florida without communicating with him, he boarded his own hired boat, and set back toward Miami.

But the stout Tarpon developed indigestion in the engine. Workman, none too good a sailor, was grateful for the flat calm as they drifted through most of the night, until, after dawn, Captain Simmons got the machinery going again. Limping on one cylinder, the Tarpon took five hours to cover a journey that should have taken two, so that it was nearly noon when Workman stepped into a telephone booth and called up Quintard.

But Quintard could not be located at his office, and Workman, in too great haste to question Gladys Gary to waste further time, climbed into an automobile and set forth on his return to Palm Beach.

He had had a whole night and a forenoon in which to study this latest bit of evidence, and it left him more bewildered than ever, if that were possible.

Sam Blobby stated that he had seen a woman fleeing from the scene of the murder. A "good-sized" woman, the shiftless negro had said. And Gladys Gary was a slim, fragile girl. Still, a frightened negro might well have thought the woman larger than she really was. Objects seem bigger in the dark than they do in the bright light of day.

He shook his head bewilderedly, and dropped into uneasy sleep in the tonneau of the motor-car.

Shortly before they reached West Palm Beach, he awoke with a start, and ordered the chauffeur to take him to the police station. Here he learned that Quintard was at the Cassenas place, Seminole Lodge, and had left word, if Workman called, to have him directed there.

Opposite Bradley's the revivalist dismissed his motor, and stepped into a wheel-chair. A few minutes later he alighted at Seminole Lodge. Quintard, on the watch for him, raced exultantly across the lawn.

"Gurney, the Paterson justice of the peace who married Cassenas, arrived this morning," he cried. "I managed to let him get a look at Kildare, without Kildare seeing him. He is willing to swear that Kildare is the man who called himself Thomas Murphy, father of the bride. Didn't want to do anything until you arrived, but I guess there's no need to wait any longer, is there? Might as well arrest him right away, eh?"

"The fact that his daughter married Cassenas doesn't prove he killed Cassenas," objected Workman.

"It supplies the motive, though. Cassenas ill-treated his daughter—"

"And five years after her death, Kildare, or Murphy, kills him." Workman shook his head. "It doesn't sound good enough."

"But, hang it all, man," cried Quintard, "you thought all along that if we—"



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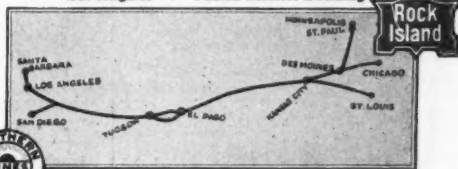
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"I saw Mrs. Penstell," interrupted Workman.

"I thought you'd been drowned on the keys, or something," grinned Quintard. "Here you've been gone two nights, and—Well, what did she say?"

"Something that may make you want to hesitate about arresting Kildare. She gave that handkerchief to Gladys Gary."

Quintard whistled. "And the General forged a letter. Why, Doctor, let's slap them under lock and key right away."

"How about Kildare?" asked Workman, smiling.

Quintard passed his hands across his forehead. "Oh, lord, I'm so rattled—"

"Let's see Miss Gary," suggested Workman.

As they rode to the General's house, Workman was silent; he was reviewing all the facts, trying to put them in their proper places, give each its proper value. Yet all of them seemed conflicting, unmated, incoherent. Quintard, bubbling with excitement, restrained his impatience.

The General and his daughter were on the front porch, and the old man arose as his visitors approached. Workman plunged right into the vital matter. He produced the handkerchief.

"This is yours, Miss Gary?" he demanded. The delicate face of Gladys Gary lighted with pleasure.

"Why, yes," she replied. "Where did you get it?"

"Oh, you'd missed it, then?" asked Workman. "When did you lose it?"

"Why, I had it on Wednesday night, at Bradley's; I remember because I'd too much powder on my face. I rubbed it off—in the cloakroom—and then put the handkerchief back in the pocket of the cloak I'd worn. At least, I thought that was where I'd put it. Later, when I found it gone, I remembered that there'd been another cloak, very much like mine, hanging next to mine on the wall, and supposed that I'd put it in the wrong pocket."

Quintard laughed aloud. A sneering incredulity was in his voice. But Workman turned on him with a gesture imperatively ordering silence.

"Would you mind describing your cloak?" he asked.

"I'll show it to you," she answered without hesitation.

She left the veranda, returning in a moment with a capelike garment of black velvet, with a white fur collar.

"And you say that there was another cloak, very similar to yours, hanging on the wall in the cloakroom?"

"There was," she asserted.

"May I take this cloak? I wish to compare it with the other," said Workman.

"Certainly," she asserted.

He thanked her and, by a gesture, ordered Quintard to be silent. He addressed the General.

"Your right wrist," he said. "When did you hurt it?"

He glanced at the member, painted with iodine and swollen badly.

The General colored. "On Wednesday evening, in my—difficulty with Cassenas. It has been practically useless since; but—in the excitement of—other matters, I didn't do anything for it until yesterday."

"I see," said Workman.

"Are you any nearer discovery of the murderer?" asked the General.

Workman shrugged. "We never know what another day will bring forth."

With that, he and Quintard departed.

"Another cloak! It sounds fishy," exclaimed Quintard when they were beyond earshot of the couple on the veranda.

"But a man with a badly sprained wrist couldn't write a letter, much less a forgery," said Workman.

"How do we know his wrist was hurt so long ago? He didn't mention anything about it before."



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"Still, that means nothing. And that we didn't notice the swelling means nothing. If he tells the truth— But let's find out as quickly as possible about the other cloak."

They rode to Bradley's. Workman had never been in the place before; his cloth prevented that. But he forgot that he was a minister, and entered the Casino. He asked for the maid of the cloak-room, and showed her Miss Gary's cloak. Had she ever seen another like this one?

"Why, yes," she told him. "I particularly noticed the other because they hung side by side here."

"Do you remember when?" asked Workman.

"Yes, indeed. I wouldn't have remembered it, perhaps, only, her fiancé being killed that night— This is Miss Gary's. The other has a white fox collar, instead of ermine, as this is. They both hung together on Wednesday night."

"And to whom did the other cloak belong?" asked Workman.

"A young lady named Ripley; the one that was with Mr. Cassenas so much," the maid replied.

"You're sure?" questioned Workman.

"It would be rather easy to find out from Miss Ripley herself, wouldn't it?" suggested the maid.

"Of course," said Workman.

As they entered their chair again he looked at Quintard. The sandy-haired man's features were grim, determined.

Workman refrained from asking him any questions. The next few moments would determine, soon enough, Quintard's attitude.

They rode, at Workman's direction, to the home of Mrs. Wiswell.

That lady and her guest were sitting in the patio. Mrs. Wiswell greeted the two men cordially, but her exuberant tones died away as she noted the gravity of Quintard's expression.

"Miss Ripley," said Workman, exhibiting Gladys Gary's cloak, "have you a wrap like this?"

"Exactly, except the collar of mine is white fox," she replied.

Quintard stepped forward. "Miss Ripley, I arrest you for the murder of Gene Cassenas." "Don't be an idiot," cried Workman. "She was back in the Lanthia, seen to enter the hotel, before Cassenas was killed."

"Ah, but she might have gone out again," cried Quintard. "We've had enough stalling. She had motive; a woman was seen running from the spot where Cassenas was found. A handkerchief was dropped in Terry's grounds by that woman. She is that woman. It's perfectly clear."

"But why would she run to Terry's house?" objected Workman.

"She'd have to run somewhere, wouldn't she? And she's known Terry before. Look how friendly they are now—together motoring, dancing— Why wouldn't she run to the house of a friend? Miss Ripley, you're under arrest. Anything you say will be used against you."

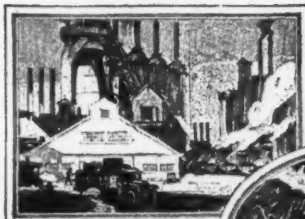
His hand fell upon her shrinking shoulder. He looked triumphantly at Workman.

"Sorry to double-cross you again, Doctor, but you're trying too hard to save this girl. I've been suspicious all along, and now—now I'm certain. Come along," he said harshly to Helen.

(To be concluded)

Can Helen Ripley actually be guilty of the murder of Eugene Cassenas? Can the blundering and opinionated Quintard be correct in his suspicions? And if Helen did not kill Cassenas, who did? Workman finally unravels the mystery in the exciting concluding installment of "The Pleasure Buyers" in next month's COSMOPOLITAN.

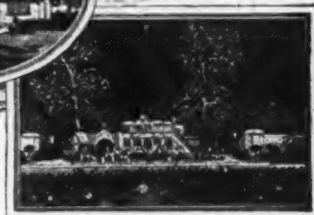
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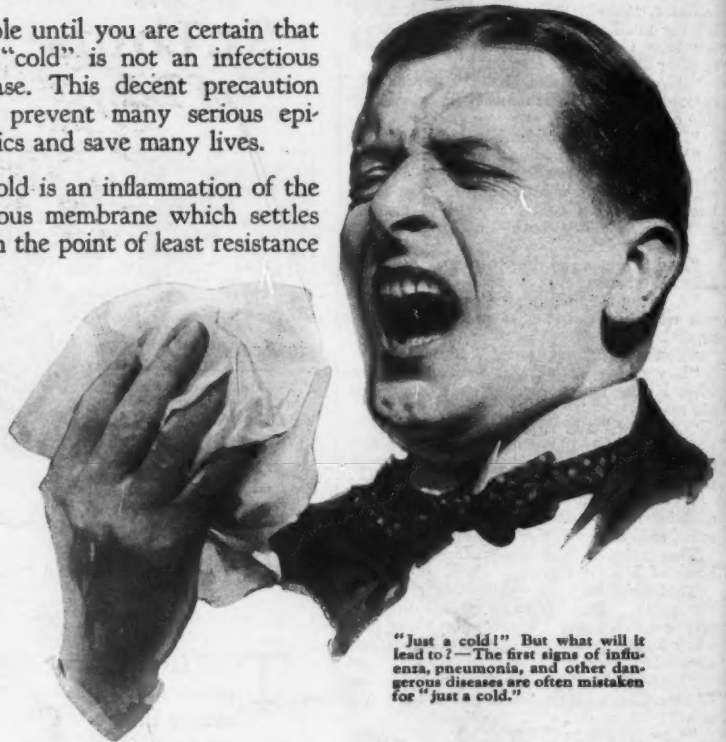
LOOK out for January colds! This is the time of year when colds are most prevalent. Seeds are now being sown for deaths from pneumonia that will occur in January, February and March. These diseases which blot out an average of 150,000 lives a year in the United States and Canada frequently develop from neglected colds. Out of every seven who get pneumonia one person dies. As many people die each year from pneumonia as from tuberculosis. Year after year the same thing happens.

Do not neglect a cold. A cold in the head is not a simple, trifling annoyance but a real disease with a medical name—coryza. In addition to the danger that pneumonia may develop, a cold often leads to chronic catarrh of the nasal passages, to ear trouble ending in deafness, to chronic bronchitis and inflammation of the bony cavities of the face. A neglected cold may even prepare the way for serious heart trouble.

The first noticeable symptoms of diphtheria, typhoid fever, measles, scarlatina, whooping cough or smallpox may appear as a cold. A person suffering from what seems to be an innocent cold may pass on to someone else a fatal attack of one of these diseases. If you or your children are suffering from colds stay away from other

people until you are certain that the "cold" is not an infectious disease. This decent precaution will prevent many serious epidemics and save many lives.

A cold is an inflammation of the mucous membrane which settles upon the point of least resistance



"Just a cold!" But what will it lead to?—The first signs of influenza, pneumonia, and other dangerous diseases are often mistaken for "just a cold."

—the nose, throat, chest, or gastro-intestinal tract. Sudden changes in temperature, drafts and exposure to damp and cold, breathing stale air and street dust—these are direct causes of colds.

Lack of fresh air and sufficient exercise to keep the skin and body healthy, lack of sleep and rest, over-indulgence in rich indigestible food—these are indirect causes of colds.

To take cold easily is to adver-

tise that your living habits are wrong. By following simple health rules you are likely to keep well. But if in spite of all your care, you do take a cold—do not treat it lightly. See your doctor. Remember, it is not a sign of weakness but a mark of wisdom never to neglect a cold.

The amount of absenteeism in large business establishments is seldom realized until the facts are thoroughly reviewed. Common colds are among the chief sources of loss of time.

In a group of about 8,000 clerical employees of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company at the Home Office, records show that colds which involve disability for work affect 2 out of every 5 employees during the course of a year. Among school children, colds are prob-

ably the cause of more absenteeism than any other illness—with consequent falling back in grades and extra expense to the tax payer.

Medical supervision of schools is becoming more thorough from year to year and is doing much to prevent serious epidemics and thus save lives. Parents should cooperate with school authorities in working to stamp out these minor illnesses which frequently have fatal consequences.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has prepared a pamphlet, "Prevention of Pneumonia" which will be mailed free to everyone interested in guarding against this dangerous disease which ranks second only to heart disease in the death rate. Send for it.

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HALEY FISKE, President.



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